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BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAYS.

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FREDERIC THE GREAT. — BUNYAN. — GOLDSMITH.
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LEIPZIG
BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ
1857.

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Frederic the Great and his Times. Edited, with an Introduction, by THOMAS CAMPBELL, Esq. 2 vols. 8vo. London: 1842.

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It may not be unacceptable to our readers that we should take this opportunity of presenting them with a slight sketch of the life of the greatest king that has, in modern times, succeeded by right of birth to a throne. It may, we fear, be impossible to compress so long and eventful a story within the limits which we must prescribe to ourselves. Should we be compelled to break off, we may perhaps, when the continuation of this work appears, return to the subject.

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The Prussian monarchy, the youngest of the great European states, but in population and revenue the fifth among them, and in art, science, and civilisation entitled to the third, if not to the second place, sprang from a humble origin. About the beginning of the fifteenth century, the marquisate

of Brandenburg was bestowed by the Emperor Sigismund on the noble family of Hohenzollern. In the sixteenth century that family embraced the Lutheran doctrines. It obtained from the King of Poland, early in the seventeenth century, the investiture of the duchy of Prussia. Even after this accession of territory, the chiefs of the house of Hohenzollern hardly ranked with the Electors of Saxony and Bavaria. The soil of Brandenburg was for the most part sterile. Even round Berlin, the capital of the province, and round Potsdam, the favourite residence of the Margraves, the country was a desert. In some places, the deep sand could with difficulty be forced by assiduous tillage to yield thin crops of rye and oats. In other places, the ancient forests, from which the conquerors of the Roman empire had descended on the Danube, remained untouched by the hand of man. Where the soil was rich it was generally marshy, and its insalubrity repelled the cultivators whom its fertility attracted. Frederic William, called the Great Elector, was the prince to whose policy his successors have agreed to ascribe their greatness. He acquired by the peace of Westphalia several valuable possessions, and among them the rich city and district of Magdeburg; and he left to his son Frederic a principality as considerable as any which was not called a kingdom.

Frederic aspired to the style of royalty. Ostentatious and profuse, negligent of his true interests and of his high duties, insatiably eager for frivolous distinctions, he added nothing to the real weight of the state which he governed: perhaps he transmitted his inheritance to his children impaired rather than augmented in value; but he succeeded in gaining the great object of his life, the title of King. In the year 1700 he assumed this new dignity. He had on that occasion to undergo all the mortifications which fall to the lot of ambitious upstarts. Compared with the other crowned heads of

Europe, he made a figure resembling that which a Nabob or a Commissary, who had bought a title, would make in the company of Peers whose ancestors had been attainted for treason against the Plantagenets. The envy of the class which Frederic quitted, and the civil scorn of the class into which he intruded himself, were marked in very significant ways. The Elector of Saxony at first refused to acknowledge the new Majesty. Lewis the Fourteenth looked down on his brother King with an air not unlike that with which the count in Molière's play regards Monsieur Jourdain, just fresh from the mummery of being made a gentleman. Austria exacted large sacrifices in return for her recognition, and at last gave it ungraciously.

Frederic was succeeded by his son, Frederic William, a prince who must be allowed to have possessed some talents for administration, but whose character was disfigured by odious vices, and whose eccentricities were such as had never before been seen out of a madhouse. He was exact and diligent in the transacting of business; and he was the first who formed the design of obtaining for Prussia a place among the European powers, altogether out of proportion to her extent and population, by means of a strong military organization. Strict economy enabled him to keep up a peace establishment of sixty thousand troops. These troops were disciplined in such a manner, that, placed beside them, the household regiments of Versailles and St. James's would have appeared an awkward squad. The master of such a force could not but be regarded by all his neighbours as a formidable enemy and a valuable ally.

But the mind of Frederic William was so ill regulated, that all his inclinations became passions, and all his passions partook of the character of moral and intellectual disease. His parsimony degenerated into sordid avarice. His taste for

military pomp and order became a mania, like that of a Dutch burgomaster for tulips, or that of a member of the Roxburghe Club for Caxtons. While the envoys of the Court of Berlin were in a state of such squalid poverty as moved the laughter of foreign capitals, while the food placed before the princes and princesses of the blood-royal of Prussia was too scanty to appease hunger, and so bad that even hunger loathed it, no price was thought too extravagant for tall recruits. The ambition of the King was to form a brigade of giants, and every country was ransacked by his agents for men above the ordinary stature. These researches were not confined to Europe. No head that towered above the crowd in the bazaars of Aleppo, of Cairo, or of Surat, could escape the crimps of Frederic William. One Irishman, more than seven feet high, who was picked up in London by the Prussian ambassador, received a bounty of near thirteen hundred pounds sterling, very much more than the ambassador's salary. This extravagance was the more absurd, because a stout youth of five feet eight, who might have been procured for a few dollars, would in all probability have been a much more valuable soldier. But to Frederic William this huge Irishman was what a brass Otho, or a Vinegar Bible, is to a collector of a different kind.

It is remarkable, that though the main end of Frederic William's administration was to have a great military force, though his reign forms an important epoch in the history of military discipline, and though his dominant passion was the love of military display, he was yet one of the most pacific of princes. We are afraid that his aversion to war was not the effect of humanity, but was merely one of his thousand whims. His feeling about his troops seems to have resembled a miser's feeling about his money. He loved to collect them, to count them, to see them increase; but he could not find it in his heart

to break in upon the precious hoard. He looked forward to some future time when his Patagonian battalions were to drive hostile infantry before them like sheep: but this future time was always receding; and it is probable that, if his life had been prolonged thirty years, his superb army would never have seen any harder service than a sham fight in the fields near Berlin. But the great military means which he had collected were destined to be employed by a spirit far more daring and inventive than his own.

Frederic, surnamed the Great, son of Frederic William, was born in January 1712. It may safely be pronounced that he had received from nature a strong and sharp understanding, and a rare firmness of temper and intensity of will. As to the other parts of his character, it is difficult to say whether they are to be ascribed to nature, or to the strange training which he underwent. The history of his boyhood is painfully interesting. Oliver Twist in the parish workhouse, Smike at Dotheboys Hall, were petted children when compared with this wretched heir-apparent of a crown. The nature of Frederic William was hard and bad, and the habit of exercising arbitrary power had made him frightfully savage. His rage constantly vented itself to right and left in curses and blows. When his Majesty took a walk, every human being fled before him, as if a tiger had broken loose from a menagerie. If he met a lady in the street, he gave her a kick, and told her to go home and mind her brats. If he saw a clergyman staring at the soldiers, he admonished the reverend gentleman to betake himself to study and prayer, and enforced this pious advice by a sound caning, administered on the spot. But it was in his own house that he was most unreasonable and ferocious. His palace was hell, and he the most execrable of fiends, a cross between Moloch and Puck. His son Frederic and his daughter Wilhelmina,

afterwards Margravine of Bareuth, were in an especial manner objects of his aversion. His own mind was uncultivated. He despised literature. He hated infidels, papists, and metaphysicians, and did not very well understand in what they differed from each other. The business of life, according to him, was to drill and to be drilled. The recreations suited to a prince, were to sit in a cloud of tobacco smoke, to sip Swedish beer between the puffs of the pipe, to play backgammon for three-halfpence a rubber, to kill wild hogs, and to shoot partridges by the thousand. The Prince Royal showed little inclination either for the serious employments or for the amusements of his father. He shirked the duties of the parade: he detested the fume of tobacco: he had no taste either for backgammon or for field sports. He had an exquisite ear, and performed skilfully on the flute. His earliest instructors had been French refugees, and they had awakened in him a strong passion for French literature and French society. Frederic William regarded these tastes as effeminate and contemptible, and, by abuse and persecution, made them still stronger. Things became worse when the Prince Royal attained that time of life at which the great revolution in the human mind and body takes place. He was guilty of some youthful indiscretions, which no good and wise parent would regard with severity. At a later period he was accused, truly or falsely, of vices from which History averts her eyes, and which even Satire blushes to name, vices such that, to borrow the energetic language of Lord Keeper Coventry, "the depraved nature of man, which of itself carrieth man to all other sin, abhorreth them." But the offences of his youth were not characterized by any peculiar turpitude. They excited, however, transports of rage in the king, who hated all faults except those to which he was himself inclined, and who conceived that he made ample atone-

ment to Heaven for his brutality, by holding the softer passions in detestation. The Prince Royal, too, was not one of those who are content to take their religion on trust. He asked puzzling questions, and brought forward arguments which seemed to savour of something different from pure Lutheranism. The King suspected that his son was inclined to be a heretic of some sort or other, whether Calvinist or Atheist his Majesty did not very well know. The ordinary malignity of Frederic William was bad enough. He now thought malignity a part of his duty as a Christian man, and all the conscience that he had stimulated his hatred. The flute was broken: the French books were sent out of the palace: the Prince was kicked and cudgelled, and pulled by the hair. At dinner the plates were hurled at his head: sometimes he was restricted to bread and water: sometimes he was forced to swallow food so nauseous that he could not keep it on his stomach. Once his father knocked him down, dragged him along the floor to a window, and was with difficulty prevented from strangling him with the cord of the curtain. The Queen, for the crime of not wishing to see her son murdered, was subjected to the grossest indignities. The Princess Wilhelmina, who took her brother's part, was treated almost as ill as Mrs. Brownrigg's apprentices. Driven to despair, the unhappy youth tried to run away. Then the fury of the old tyrant rose to madness. The Prince was an officer in the army: his flight was therefore desertion; and, in the moral code of Frederic William, desertion was the highest of all crimes. "Desertion," says this royal theologian, in one of his half crazy letters, "is from hell. It is a work of the children of the Devil. No child of God could possibly be guilty of it." An accomplice of the Prince, in spite of the recommendation of a court-martial, was mercilessly put to death. It seemed probable that the Prince himself would suffer the same fate.

It was with difficulty that the intercession of the States of Holland, of the Kings of Sweden and Poland, and of the Emperor of Germany, saved the House of Brandenburg from the stain of an unnatural murder. After months of cruel suspense, Frederic learned that his life would be spared. He remained, however, long a prisoner; but he was not on that account to be pitied. He found in his gaolers a tenderness which he had never found in his father; his table was not sumptuous, but he had wholesome food in sufficient quantity to appease hunger: he could read the Henriade without being kicked, and could play on his flute without having it broken over his head.

When his confinement terminated he was a man. He had nearly completed his twenty-first year, and could scarcely be kept much longer under the restraints which had made his boyhood miserable. Suffering had matured his understanding, while it had hardened his heart and soured his temper. He had learned self-command and dissimulation: he affected to conform to some of his father's views, and submissively accepted a wife, who was a wife only in name, from his father's hand. He also served with credit, though without any opportunity of acquiring brilliant distinction, under the command of Prince Eugene, during a campaign marked by no extraordinary events. He was now permitted to keep a separate establishment, and was therefore able to indulge with caution his own tastes. Partly in order to conciliate the king, and partly, no doubt, from inclination, he gave up a portion of his time to military and political business, and thus gradually acquired such an aptitude for affairs as his most intimate associates were not aware that he possessed.

His favourite abode was at Rheinsberg, near the frontier which separates the Prussian dominions from the Duchy of Mecklenburg. Rheinsberg is a fertile and smiling spot, in

the midst of the sandy waste of the Marquisate. The mansion, surrounded by woods of oak and beech, looks out upon a spacious lake. There Frederic amused himself by laying out gardens in regular alleys and intricate mazes, by building obelisks, temples, and conservatories, and by collecting rare fruits and flowers. His retirement was enlivened by a few companions, among whom he seems to have preferred those who, by birth or extraction, were French. With these inmates he dined and supped well, drank freely, and amused himself sometimes with concerts, and sometimes with holding chapters of a fraternity which he called the Order of Bayard; but literature was his chief resource.

His education had been entirely French. The long ascendency which Lewis XIV. had enjoyed, and the eminent merit of the tragic and comic dramatists, of the satirists, and of the preachers who had flourished under that magnificent prince, had made the French language predominant in Europe. Even in countries which had a national literature, and which could boast of names greater than those of Racine, of Molière, and of Massillon, in the country of Dante, in the country of Cervantes, in the country of Shakspeare and Milton, the intellectual fashions of Paris had been to a great extent adopted. Germany had not yet produced a single masterpiece of poetry or eloquence. In Germany, therefore, the French taste reigned without rival and without limit. Every youth of rank was taught to speak and write French. That he should speak and write his own tongue with politeness, or even with accuracy and facility, was regarded as comparatively an unimportant object. Even Frederic William, with all his rugged Saxon prejudices, thought it necessary that his children should know French, and quite unnecessary that they should be well versed in German. The Latin was positively interdicted. "My son," his Majesty

wrote, "shall not learn Latin; and, more than that, I will not suffer any body even to mention such a thing to me." One of the preceptors ventured to read the Golden Bull in the original with the Prince Royal. Frederic William entered the room, and broke out in his usual kingly style.

"Rascal, what are you at there?"

"Please your Majesty," answered the preceptor, "I was explaining the Golden Bull to his Royal Highness."

"I'll Golden Bull you, you rascal!" roared the Majesty of Prussia. Up went the King's cane; away ran the terrified instructor; and Frederic's classical studies ended for ever. He now and then affected to quote Latin sentences, and produced such exquisitely Ciceronian phrases as these: — "Stante pede morire," — "De gustibus non est disputandus," — "Tot verbas tot spondera." Of Italian, he had not enough to read a page of Metastasio with ease; and of the Spanish and English, he did not, as far as we are aware, understand a single word.

As the highest human compositions to which he had access were those of the French writers, it is not strange that his admiration for these writers should have been unbounded. His ambitious and eager temper early prompted him to imitate what he admired. The wish, perhaps, dearest to his heart was, that he might rank among the masters of French rhetoric and poetry. He wrote prose and verse as indefatigably as if he had been a starving hack of Cave or Osborn; but Nature, which had bestowed on him, in a large measure, the talents of a captain and of an administrator, had withheld from him those higher and rarer gifts, without which industry labours in vain to produce immortal eloquence and song. And, indeed, had he been blessed with more imagination, wit, and fertility of thought, than he appears to have had, he would still have been subject to one great disadvantage,

which would, in all probability, have for ever prevented him from taking a high place among men of letters. He had not the full command of any language. There was no machine of thought which he could employ with perfect ease, confidence, and freedom. He had German enough to scold his servants, or to give the word of command to his grenadiers; but his grammar and pronunciation were extremely bad. He found it difficult to make out the meaning even of the simplest German poetry. On one occasion a version of Racine's Iphigénie was read to him. He held the French original in his hand; but was forced to own that, even with such help, he could not understand the translation. Yet, though he had neglected his mother tongue in order to bestow all his attention on French, his French was, after all, the French of a foreigner. It was necessary for him to have always at his beck some men of letters from Paris to point out the solecisms and false rhymes of which, to the last, he was frequently guilty. Even had he possessed the poetic faculty, of which, as far as we can judge, he was utterly destitute, the want of a language would have prevented him from being a great poet. No noble work of imagination, as far as we recollect, was ever composed by any man, except in a dialect which he had learned without remembering how or when, and which he had spoken with perfect ease before he had ever analysed its structure. Romans of great abilities wrote Greek verses; but how many of those verses have deserved to live? Many men of eminent genius have, in modern times, written Latin poems; but, as far as we are aware, none of those poems, not even Milton's, can be ranked in the first class of art, or even very high in the second. It is not strange, therefore, that, in the French verses of Frederic, we can find nothing beyond the reach of any man of good parts and industry, nothing above the level of Newdigate and Seatonian poetry. His

best pieces may perhaps rank with the worst in Dodsley's collection. In history, he succeeded better. We do not indeed find, in any part of his voluminous Memoirs, either deep reflection or vivid painting. But the narrative is distinguished by clearness, conciseness, good sense, and a certain air of truth and simplicity, which is singularly graceful in a man who, having done great things, sits down to relate them. On the whole, however, none of his writings are so agreeable to us as his Letters, particularly those which are written with earnestness, and are not embroidered with verses.

It is not strange that a young man devoted to literature, and acquainted only with the literature of France, should have looked with profound veneration on the genius of Voltaire. "A man who has never seen the sun," says Calderon, in one of his charming comedies, "cannot be blamed for thinking that no glory can exceed that of the moon. A man who has seen neither moon nor sun, cannot be blamed for talking of the unrivalled brightness of the morning star." Had Frederic been able to read Homer and Milton, or even Virgil and Tasso, his admiration of the Henriade would prove that he was utterly destitute of the power of discerning what is excellent in art. Had he been familiar with Sophocles or Shakspeare, we should have expected him to appreciate Zaire more justly. Had he been able to study Thucydides and Tacitus in the original Greek and Latin, he would have known that there were heights in the eloquence of history far beyond the reach of the author of the Life of Charles the Twelfth. But the finest heroic poem, several of the most powerful tragedies, and the most brilliant and picturesque historical work that Frederic had ever read, were Voltaire's. Such high and various excellence moved the young Prince almost to adoration. The opinions of Voltaire on religious

and philosophical questions had not yet been fully exhibited to the public. At a later period, when an exile from his country, and at open war with the Church, he spoke out. But when Frederic was at Rheinsberg, Voltaire was still a courtier; and, though he could not always curb his petulant wit, he had as yet published nothing that could exclude him from Versailles, and little that a divine of the mild and generous school of Grotius and Tillotson might not read with pleasure. In the Henriade, in Zaire, and in Alzire, Christian piety is exhibited in the most amiable form; and, some years after the period of which we are writing, a Pope condescended to accept the dedication of Mahomet. The real sentiments of the poet, however, might be clearly perceived by a keen eye through the decent disguise with which he veiled them, and could not escape the sagacity of Frederic, who held similar opinions, and had been accustomed to practise similar dissimulation.

The Prince wrote to his idol in the style of a worshipper; and Voltaire replied with exquisite grace and address. A correspondence followed, which may be studied with advantage by those who wish to become proficients in the ignoble art of flattery. No man ever paid compliments better than Voltaire. His sweetest confectionery had always a delicate, yet stimulating flavour, which was delightful to palates wearied by the coarse preparations of inferior artists. It was only from his hand that so much sugar could be swallowed without making the swallower sick. Copies of verses, writing-desks, trinkets of amber, were exchanged between the friends. Frederic confided his writings to Voltaire; and Voltaire applauded, as if Frederic had been Racine and Bossuet in one. One of his Royal Highness's performances was a refutation of Machiavelli. Voltaire undertook to convey it to the press. It was entitled the Anti-Machiavel, and was an

edifying homily against rapacity, perfidy, arbitrary government, unjust war, in short, against almost every thing for which its author is now remembered among men.

The old King uttered now and then a ferocious growl at the diversions of Rheinsberg. But his health was broken; his end was approaching; and his vigour was impaired. He had only one pleasure left, that of seeing tall soldiers. He could always be propitiated by a present of a grenadier of six feet four or six feet five; and such presents were from time to time judiciously offered by his son.

Early in the year 1740, Frederic William met death with a firmness and dignity worthy of a better and wiser man; and Frederic, who had just completed his twenty-eighth year, became King of Prussia. His character was little understood. That he had good abilities, indeed, no person who had talked with him, or corresponded with him, could doubt. But the easy Epicurean life which he had led, his love of good cookery and good wine, of music, of conversation, of light literature, led many to regard him as a sensual and intellectual voluptuary. His habit of canting about moderation, peace, liberty, and the happiness which a good mind derives from the happiness of others, had imposed on some who should have known better. Those who thought best of him, expected a Telemachus after Fénélon's pattern. Others predicted the approach of a Medicean age, an age propitious to learning and art, and not unpropitious to pleasure. Nobody had the least suspicion that a tyrant of extraordinary military and political talents, of industry more extraordinary still, without fear, without faith, and without mercy, had ascended the throne.

The disappointment of Falstaff at his old boon-companion's coronation was not more bitter than that which awaited some of the inmates of Rheinsberg. They had long looked forward

to the accession of their patron, as to the event from which their own prosperity and greatness was to date. They had at last reached the promised land, the land which they had figured to themselves as flowing with milk and honey; and they found it a desert. "No more of these fooleries," was the short, sharp admonition given by Frederic to one of them. It soon became plain that, in the most important points, the new sovereign bore a strong family likeness to his predecessor. There was indeed a wide difference between the father and the son as respected extent and vigour of intellect, speculative opinions, amusements, studies, outward demeanour. But the groundwork of the character was the same in both. To both were common the love of order, the love of business, the military taste, the parsimony, the imperious spirit, the temper irritable even to ferocity, the pleasure in the pain and humiliation of others. But these propensities had in Frederic William partaken of the general unsoundness of his mind, and wore a very different aspect when found in company with the strong and cultivated understanding of his successor. Thus, for example, Frederic was as anxious as any prince could be about the efficiency of his army. But this anxiety never degenerated into a monomania, like that which led his father to pay fancy prices for giants. Frederic was as thrifty about money as any prince or any private man ought to be. But he did not conceive, like his father, that it was worth while to eat unwholesome cabbages for the purpose of saving four or five rixdollars in the year. Frederic was, we fear, as malevolent as his father; but Frederic's wit enabled him often to show his malevolence in ways more decent than those to which his father resorted, and to inflict misery and degradation by a taunt instead of a blow. Frederic, it is true, by no means relinquished his hereditary privilege of kicking and cudgelling. His practice,

however, as to that matter, differed in some important respects from his father's. To Frederic William, the mere circumstance that any persons whatever, men, women, or children, Prussians or foreigners, were within reach of his toes and of his cane, appeared to be a sufficient reason for proceeding to belabour them. Frederic required provocation as well as vicinity; nor was he ever known to inflict this paternal species of correction on any but his born subjects; though on one occasion M. Thiébault had reason, during a few seconds, to anticipate the high honour of being an exception to this general rule.

The character of Frederic was still very imperfectly understood either by his subjects or by his neighbours, when events occurred which exhibited it in a strong light. A few months after his accession died Charles VI., Emperor of Germany, the last descendant, in the male line, of the house of Austria.

Charles left no son, and had, long before his death, relinquished all hopes of male issue. During the latter part of his life, his principal object had been to secure to his descendants in the female line the many crowns of the house of Hapsburg. With this view, he had promulgated a new law of succession, widely celebrated throughout Europe under the name of the Pragmatic Sanction. By virtue of this law, his daughter, the Archduchess Maria Theresa, wife of Francis of Loraine, succeeded to the dominions of her ancestors.

No sovereign has ever taken possession of a throne by a clearer title. All the politics of the Austrian cabinet had, during twenty years, been directed to one single end, the settlement of the succession. From every person whose rights could be considered as injuriously affected, renunciations in the most solemn form had been obtained. The new law

had been ratified by the Estates of all the kingdoms and principalities which made up the great Austrian monarchy. England, France, Spain, Russia, Poland, Prussia, Sweden, Denmark, the Germanic body, had bound themselves by treaty to maintain the Pragmatic Sanction. That instrument was placed under the protection of the public faith of the whole civilized world.

Even if no positive stipulations on this subject had existed, the arrangement was one which no good man would have been willing to disturb. It was a peaceable arrangement. It was an arrangement acceptable to the great population whose happiness was chiefly concerned. It was an arrangement which made no change in the distribution of power among the states of Christendom. It was an arrangement which could be set aside only by means of a general war; and, if it were set aside, the effect would be, that the equilibrium of Europe would be deranged, that the loyal and patriotic feelings of millions would be cruelly outraged, and that great provinces which had been united for centuries would be torn from each other by main force.

The sovereigns of Europe were, therefore, bound by every obligation which those who are intrusted with power over their fellow-creatures ought to hold most sacred, to respect and defend the rights of the Archduchess. Her situation and her personal qualities were such as might be expected to move the mind of any generous man to pity, admiration, and chivalrous tenderness. She was in her twenty-fourth year. Her form was majestic, her features beautiful, her countenance sweet and animated, her voice musical, her deportment gracious and dignified. In all domestic relations she was without reproach. She was married to a husband whom she loved, and was on the point of giving birth to a child, when death deprived her of her father. The loss of a parent, and

the new cares of empire, were too much for her in the delicate state of her health. Her spirits were depressed, and her cheek lost its bloom. Yet it seemed that she had little cause for anxiety. It seemed that justice, humanity, and the faith of treaties would have their due weight, and that the settlement so solemnly guaranteed would be quietly carried into effect. England, Russia, Poland, and Holland, declared in form their intention to adhere to their engagements. The French ministers made a verbal declaration to the same effect. But from no quarter did the young Queen of Hungary receive stronger assurances of friendship and support than from the King of Prussia.

Yet the King of Prussia, the Anti-Machiavel, had already fully determined to commit the great crime of violating his plighted faith, of robbing the ally whom he was bound to defend, and of plunging all Europe into a long, bloody, and desolating war; and all this for no end whatever, except that he might extend his dominions, and see his name in the gazettes. He determined to assemble a great army with speed and secresy, to invade Silesia before Maria Theresa should be apprised of his design, and to add that rich province to his kingdom.

We will not condescend to refute at length the pleas which the compiler of the Memoirs before us has copied from Doctor Preuss. They amount to this, that the house of Brandenburg had some ancient pretensions to Silesia, and had in the previous century been compelled, by hard usage on the part of the Court of Vienna, to waive those pretensions. It is certain that, whoever might originally have been in the right, Prussia had submitted. Prince after prince of the house of Brandenburg had acquiesced in the existing arrangement. Nay, the Court of Berlin had recently been allied with that of Vienna, and had guaranteed the integrity of the Austrian

states. Is it not perfectly clear that, if antiquated claims are to be set up against recent treaties and long possession, the world can never be at peace for a day? The laws of all nations have wisely established a time of limitation, after which titles, however illegitimate in their origin, cannot be questioned. It is felt by every body, that to eject a person from his estate on the ground of some injustice committed in the time of the Tudors would produce all the evils which result from arbitrary confiscation, and would make all property insecure. It concerns the commonwealth — so runs the legal maxim — that there be an end of litigation. And surely this maxim is at least equally applicable to the great commonwealth of states; for in that commonwealth litigation means the devastation of provinces, the suspension of trade and industry, sieges like those of Badajoz and St. Sebastian, pitched fields like those of Eylau and Borodino. We hold that the transfer of Norway from Denmark to Sweden was an unjustifiable proceeding; but would the king of Denmark be therefore justified in landing, without any new provocation, in Norway, and commencing military operations there? The king of Holland thinks, no doubt, that he was unjustly deprived of the Belgian provinces. Grant that it were so. Would he, therefore, be justified in marching with an army on Brussels? The case against Frederic was still stronger, inasmuch as the injustice of which he complained had been committed more than a century before. Nor must it be forgotten that he owed the highest personal obligations to the house of Austria. It may be doubted whether his life had not been preserved by the intercession of the prince whose daughter he was about to plunder.

To do the King justice, he pretended to no more virtue than he had. In manifestoes he might, for form's sake, insert some idle stories about his antiquated claim on Silesia; but

in his conversations and Memoirs he took a very different tone. His own words are: "Ambition, interest, the desire of making people talk about me, carried the day; and I decided for war."

Having resolved on this course, he acted with ability and vigour. It was impossible wholly to conceal his preparations; for throughout the Prussian territories regiments, guns, and baggage were in motion. The Austrian envoy at Berlin apprised his court of these facts, and expressed a suspicion of Frederic's designs; but the ministers of Maria Theresa refused to give credit to so black an imputation on a young prince who was known chiefly by his high professions of integrity and philanthropy. "We will not," they wrote, "we cannot, believe it."

In the mean time the Prussian forces had been assembled. Without any declaration of war, without any demand for reparation, in the very act of pouring forth compliments and assurances of good-will, Frederic commenced hostilities. Many thousands of his troops were actually in Silesia before the Queen of Hungary knew that he had set up any claim to any part of her territories. At length he sent her a message which could be regarded only as an insult. If she would but let him have Silesia, he would, he said, stand by her against any power which should try to deprive her of her other dominions; as if he was not already bound to stand by her, or as if his new promise could be of more value than the old one.

It was the depth of winter. The cold was severe, and the roads heavy with mire. But the Prussians pressed on. Resistance was impossible. The Austrian army was then neither numerous nor efficient. The small portion of that army which lay in Silesia was unprepared for hostilities. Glogau was blockaded; Breslau opened its gates; Ohlau was

evacuated. A few scattered garrisons still held out; but the whole open country was subjugated: no enemy ventured to encounter the King in the field; and, before the end of January 1741, he returned to receive the congratulations of his subjects at Berlin.

Had the Silesian question been merely a question between Frederic and Maria Theresa, it would be impossible to acquit the Prussian King of gross perfidy. But when we consider the effects which his policy produced, and could not fail to produce, on the whole community of civilized nations, we are compelled to pronounce a condemnation still more severe. Till he began the war, it seemed possible, even probable, that the peace of the world would be preserved. The plunder of the great Austrian heritage was indeed a strong temptation; and in more than one cabinet ambitious schemes were already meditated. But the treaties by which the Pragmatic Sanction had been guaranteed were express and recent. To throw all Europe into confusion for a purpose clearly unjust, was no light matter. England was true to her engagements. The voice of Fleury had always been for peace. He had a conscience. He was now in extreme old age, and was unwilling, after a life which, when his situation was considered, must be pronounced singularly pure, to carry the fresh stain of a great crime before the tribunal of his God. Even the vain and unprincipled Belle-Isle, whose whole life was one wild day-dream of conquest and spoliation, felt that France, bound as she was by solemn stipulations, could not, without disgrace, make a direct attack on the Austrian dominions. Charles, Elector of Bavaria, pretended that he had a right to a large part of the inheritance which the Pragmatic Sanction gave to the Queen of Hungary; but he was not sufficiently powerful to move without support. It might, therefore, not unreasonably be expected that, after a short period of restlessness, all the

potentates of Christendom would acquiesce in the arrangements made by the late Emperor. But the selfish repacity of the King of Prussia gave the signal to his neighbours. His example quieted their sense of shame. His success led them to underrate the difficulty of dismembering the Austrian monarchy. The whole world sprang to arms. On the head of Frederic is all the blood which was shed in a war which raged during many years and in every quarter of the globe, the blood of the column of Fontenoy, the blood of the mountaineers who were slaughtered at Culloden. The evils produced by his wickedness were felt in lands where the name of Prussia was unknown; and, in order that he might rob a neighbour whom he had promised to defend, black men fought on the coast of Coromandel, and red men scalped each other by the Great Lakes of North America.

Silesia had been occupied without a battle; but the Austrian troops were advancing to the relief of the fortresses which still held out. In the spring Frederic rejoined his army. He had seen little of war, and had never commanded any great body of men in the field. It is not, therefore, strange that his first military operations showed little of that skill which, at a later period, was the admiration of Europe. What connoisseurs say of some pictures painted by Raphael in his youth, may be said of this campaign. It was in Frederic's early bad manner. Fortunately for him, the generals to whom he was opposed were men of small capacity. The discipline of his own troops, particularly of the infantry, was unequalled in that age; and some able and experienced officers were at hand to assist him with their advice. Of these, the most distinguished was Field-Marshal Schwerin, a brave adventurer of Pomeranian extraction, who had served half the governments in Europe, had borne the commissions of the States-General of Holland and of the Duke of Mecklenburg,

had fought under Marlborough at Blenheim, and had been with Charles the Twelfth at Bender.

Frederic's first battle was fought at Molwitz; and never did the career of a great commander open in a more inauspicious manner. His army was victorious. Not only, however, did he not establish his title to the character of an able general, but he was so unfortunate as to make it doubtful whether he possessed the vulgar courage of a soldier. The cavalry, which he commanded in person, was put to flight. Unaccustomed to the tumult and carnage of a field of battle, he lost his self-possession, and listened too readily to those who urged him to save himself. His English grey carried him many miles from the field, while Schwerin, though wounded in two places, manfully upheld the day. The skill of the old Field-Marshal and the steadiness of the Prussian battalions prevailed, and the Austrian army was driven from the field with the loss of eight thousand men.

The news was carried late at night to a mill in which the King had taken shelter. It gave him a bitter pang. He was successful; but he owed his success to dispositions which others had made, and to the valour of men who had fought while he was flying. So unpromising was the first appearance of the greatest warrior of that age!

The battle of Molwitz was the signal for a general explosion throughout Europe. Bavaria took up arms. France, not yet declaring herself a principal in the war, took part in it as an ally of Bavaria. The two great statesmen to whom mankind had owed many years of tranquillity, disappeared about this time from the scene, but not till they had both been guilty of the weakness of sacrificing their sense of justice and their love of peace to the vain hope of preserving their power. Fleury, sinking under age and infirmity, was borne down by the impetuosity of Belle-Isle. Walpole retired from the

service of his ungrateful country to his woods and paintings at Houghton; and his power devolved on the daring and eccentric Carteret. As were the ministers, so were the nations. Thirty years during which Europe had, with few interruptions, enjoyed repose, had prepared the public mind for great military efforts. A new generation had grown up, which could not remember the siege of Turin or the slaughter of Malplaquet; which knew war by nothing but its trophies; and which, while it looked with pride on the tapestries at Blenheim, or the statue in the Place of Victories, little thought by what privations, by what waste of private fortunes, by how many bitter tears, conquests must be purchased.

For a time fortune seemed adverse to the Queen of Hungary. Frederic invaded Moravia. The French and Bavarians penetrated into Bohemia and were there joined by the Saxons. Prague was taken. The Elector of Bavaria was raised by the suffrages of his colleagues to the Imperial throne — a throne which the practice of centuries had almost entitled the House of Austria to regard as a hereditary possession.

Yet was the spirit of the haughty daughter of the Cæsars unbroken. Hungary was still hers by an unquestionable title; and, although her ancestors had found Hungary the most mutinous of all their kingdoms, she resolved to trust herself to the fidelity of a people, rude indeed, turbulent, and impatient of oppression, but brave, generous, and simple-hearted. In the midst of distress and peril she had given birth to a son, afterwards the Emperor Joseph the Second. Scarcely had she risen from her couch, when she hastened to Presburg. There, in the sight of an innumerable multitude, she was crowned with the crown and robed with the robe of St. Stephen. No spectator could restrain his tears when the beautiful young mother, still weak from child-bearing, rode, after the fashion of her fathers, up the Mount of Defiance, unsheathed the

ancient sword of state, shook it towards north and south, east and west, and, with a glow on her pale face, challenged the four corners of the world to dispute her rights and those of her boy. At the first sitting of the Diet she appeared clad in deep mourning for her father, and in pathetic and dignified words implored her people to support her just cause. Magnates and deputies sprang up, half drew their sabres, and with eager voices vowed to stand by her with their lives and fortunes. Till then, her firmness had never once forsaken her before the public eye; but at that shout she sank down upon her throne, and wept aloud. Still more touching was the sight when, a few days later, she came again before the Estates of her realm, and held up before them the little Archduke in her arms. Then it was that the enthusiasm of Hungary broke forth into that war-cry which soon resounded throughout Europe, "Let us die for our King, Maria Theresa!"

In the mean time, Frederic was meditating a change of policy. He had no wish to raise France to supreme power on the Continent, at the expense of the house of Hapsburg. His first object was to rob the Queen of Hungary. His second object was that, if possible, nobody should rob her but himself. He had entered into engagements with the powers leagued against Austria; but these engagements were in his estimation of no more force than the guarantee formerly given to the Pragmatic Sanction. His plan now was to secure his share of the plunder by betraying his accomplices. Maria Theresa was little inclined to listen to any such compromise; but the English government represented to her so strongly the necessity of buying off Frederic, that she agreed to negotiate. The negotiation would not, however, have ended in a treaty, had not the arms of Frederic been crowned with a second victory. Prince Charles of Loraine, brother-in-law to Maria

Theresa, a bold and active, though unfortunate general, gave battle to the Prussians at Chotusitz, and was defeated. The King was still only a learner of the military art. He acknowledged, at a later period, that his success on this occasion was to be attributed, not at all to his own generalship, but solely to the valour and steadiness of his troops. He completely effaced, however, by his personal courage and energy, the stain which Molwitz had left on his reputation.

A peace, concluded under the English mediation, was the fruit of this battle. Maria Theresa ceded Silesia: Frederic abandoned his allies: Saxony followed his example; and the Queen was left at liberty to turn her whole force against France and Bavaria. She was every where triumphant. The French were compelled to evacuate Bohemia, and with difficulty effected their escape. The whole line of their retreat might be tracked by the corpses of thousands who had died of cold, fatigue, and hunger. Many of those who reached their country carried with them the seeds of death. Bavaria was overrun by bands of ferocious warriors from that bloody debatable land which lies on the frontier between Christendom and Islam. The terrible names of the Pandoor, the Croat, and the Hussar, then first became familiar to western Europe. The unfortunate Charles of Bavaria, vanquished by Austria, betrayed by Prussia, driven from his hereditary states, and neglected by his allies, was hurried by shame and remorse to an untimely end. An English army appeared in the heart of Germany, and defeated the French at Dettingen. The Austrian captains already began to talk of completing the work of Marlborough and Eugene, and of compelling France to relinquish Alsace and the Three Bishoprics.

The Court of Versailles, in this peril, looked to Frederic

for help. He had been guilty of two great treasons; perhaps he might be induced to commit a third. The Duchess of Chateauroux then held the chief influence over the feeble Lewis. She determined to send an agent to Berlin; and Voltaire was selected for the mission. He eagerly undertook the task; for, while his literary fame filled all Europe, he was troubled with a childish craving for political distinction. He was vain, and not without reason, of his address, and of his insinuating eloquence; and he flattered himself that he possessed boundless influence over the King of Prussia. The truth was that he knew, as yet, only one corner of Frederic's character. He was well acquainted with all the petty vanities and affectations of the poetaster; but was not aware that these foibles were united with all the talents and vices which lead to success in active life, and that the unlucky versifier who pestered him with reams of middling Alexandrines, was the most vigilant, suspicious, and severe of politicians.

Voltaire was received with every mark of respect and friendship, was lodged in the palace, and had a seat daily at the royal table. The negotiation was of an extraordinary description. Nothing can be conceived more whimsical than the conferences which took place between the first literary man and the first practical man of the age, whom a strange weakness had induced to exchange their parts. The great poet would talk of nothing but treaties and guarantees, and the great King of nothing but metaphors and rhymes. On one occasion Voltaire put into his Majesty's hands a paper on the state of Europe, and received it back with verses scrawled on the margin. In secret they both laughed at each other. Voltaire did not spare the King's poems; and the King has left on record his opinion of Voltaire's diplomacy: "He had no credentials," says Frederic, "and the whole mission was a joke, a mere farce."

"But what the influence of Voltaire could not effect, the rapid progress of the Austrian arms effected. If it should be in the power of Maria Theresa and George the Second to dictate terms of peace to France, what chance was there that Prussia would long retain Silesia? Frederic's conscience told him that he had acted perfidiously and inhumanly towards the Queen of Hungary. That her resentment was strong she had given ample proof; and of her respect for treaties he judged by his own. Guarantees, he said, were mere filigree, pretty to look at, but too brittle to bear the slightest pressure. He thought it his safest course to ally himself closely to France, and again to attack the Empress Queen. Accordingly, in the autumn of 1744, without notice, without any decent pretext, he recommenced hostilities, marched through the electorate of Saxony without troubling himself about the permission of the Elector, invaded Bohemia, took Prague, and even menaced Vienna.

It was now that, for the first time, he experienced the inconstancy of fortune. An Austrian army under Charles of Loraine threatened his communications with Silesia. Saxony was all in arms behind him. He found it necessary to save himself by a retreat. He afterwards owned that his failure was the natural effect of his own blunders. No general, he said, had ever committed greater faults. It must be added, that to the reverses of this campaign he always ascribed his subsequent successes. It was in the midst of difficulty and disgrace that he caught the first clear glimpse of the principles of the military art.

The memorable year 1745 followed. The war raged by sea and land, in Italy, in Germany, and in Flanders; and even England, after many years of profound internal quiet, saw, for the last time, hostile armies set in battle array against each other. This year is memorable in the life of

Frederic, as the date at which his novitiate in the art of war may be said to have terminated. There have been great captains whose precocious and self-taught military skill resembled intuition. Condé, Clive, and Napoleon are examples. But Frederic was not one of these brilliant portents. His proficiency in military science was simply the proficiency which a man of vigorous faculties makes in any science to which he applies his mind with earnestness and industry. It was at Hohenfriedberg that he first proved how much he had profited by his errors, and by their consequences. His victory on that day was chiefly due to his skilful dispositions, and convinced Europe that the prince who, a few years before, had stood aghast in the rout of Molwitz, had attained in the military art a mastery equalled by none of his contemporaries, or equalled by Saxe alone. The victory of Hohenfriedberg was speedily followed by that of Sorr.

In the mean time, the arms of France had been victorious in the Low Countries. Frederic had no longer reason to fear that Maria Theresa would be able to give law to Europe, and he began to meditate a fourth breach of his engagements. The Court of Versailles was alarmed and mortified. A letter of earnest expostulation, in the handwriting of Lewis, was sent to Berlin; but in vain. In the autumn of 1745, Frederic made peace with England, and, before the close of the year, with Austria also. The pretensions of Charles of Bavaria could present no obstacle to an accommodation. That unhappy prince was no more; and Francis of Loraine, the husband of Maria Theresa, was raised, with the general assent of the Germanic body, to the Imperial throne.

Prussia was again at peace; but the European war lasted till, in the year 1748, it was terminated by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. Of all the powers that had taken part in it, the only gainer was Frederic. Not only had he added to his

patrimony the fine province of Silesia: he had, by his unprincipled dexterity, succeeded so well in alternately depressing the scale of Austria and that of France, that he was generally regarded as holding the balance of Europe, a high dignity for one who ranked lowest among kings, and whose great-grandfather had been no more than a Margrave. By the public, the King of Prussia was considered as a politician destitute alike of morality and decency, insatiably rapacious, and shamelessly false; nor was the public much in the wrong. He was at the same time allowed to be a man of parts, a rising general, a shrewd negotiator and administrator. Those qualities wherein he surpassed all mankind, were as yet unknown to others or to himself; for they were qualities which shine out only on a dark ground. His career had hitherto, with little interruption, been prosperous; and it was only in adversity, in adversity which seemed without hope or resource, in adversity which would have overwhelmed even men celebrated for strength of mind, that his real greatness could be shown.

He had, from the commencement of his reign, applied himself to public business after a fashion unknown among kings. Lewis XIV., indeed, had been his own prime minister, and had exercised a general superintendence over all the departments of the government; but this was not sufficient for Frederic. He was not content with being his own prime minister: he would be his own sole minister. Under him there was no room, not merely for a Richelieu or a Mazarin, but for a Colbert, a Louvois, or a Torcy. A love of labour for its own sake, a restless and insatiable longing to dictate, to intermeddle, to make his power felt, a profound scorn and distrust of his fellow-creatures, made him unwilling to ask counsel, to confide important secrets, to delegate ample powers. The highest functionaries under his government

were mere clerks, and were not so much trusted by him as valuable clerks are often trusted by the heads of departments. He was his own treasurer, his own commander-in-chief, his own intendant of public works, his own minister for trade and justice, for home affairs and foreign affairs, his own master of the horse, steward, and chamberlain. Matters, of which no chief of an office in any other government would ever hear, were, in this singular monarchy, decided by the King in person. If a traveller wished for a good place to see a review, he had to write to Frederic, and received next day, from a royal messenger, Frederic's answer signed by Frederic's own hand. This was an extravagant, a morbid activity. The public business would assuredly have been better done if each department had been put under a man of talents and integrity, and if the King had contented himself with a general control. In this manner the advantages which belong to unity of design, and the advantages which belong to the divison of labour, would have been to a great extent combined. But such a system would not have suited the peculiar temper of Frederic. He could tolerate no will, no reason, in the state, save his own. He wished for no abler assistance than that of penmen who had just understanding enough to translate and transcribe, to make out his scrawls, and to put his concise Yes and No into an official form. Of the higher intellectual faculties, there is as much in a copying machine, or a lithographic press, as he required from a secretary of the cabinet.

His own exertions were such as were hardly to be expected from a human body or a human mind. At Potsdam, his ordinary residence, he rose at three in summer and four in winter. A page soon appeared, with a large basket full of all the letters which had arrived for the King by the last courier, despatches from ambassadors, reports from officers

of revenue, plans of buildings, proposals for draining marshes, complaints from persons who thought themselves aggrieved, applications from persons who wanted titles, military commissions, and civil situations. He examined the seals with a keen eye; for he was never for a moment free from the suspicion that some fraud might be practised on him. Then he read the letters, divided them into several packets, and signified his pleasure, generally by a mark, often by two or three words, now and then by some cutting epigram. By eight he had generally finished this part of his task. The adjutant-general was then in attendance, and received instructions for the day as to all the military arrangements of the kingdom. Then the King went to review his guards, not as kings ordinarily review their guards, but with the minute attention and severity of an old drill-sergeant. In the mean time the four cabinet secretaries had been employed in answering the letters on which the King had that morning signified his will. These unhappy men were forced to work all the year round like negro slaves in the time of the sugar-crop. They never had a holiday. They never knew what it was to dine. It was necessary that, before they stirred, they should finish the whole of their work. The King, always on his guard against treachery, took from the heap a handful of letters at random, and looked into them to see whether his instructions had been exactly followed. This was no bad security against foul play on the part of the secretaries; for if one of them were detected in a trick, he might think himself fortunate if he escaped with five years of imprisonment in a dungeon. Frederic then signed the replies, and all were sent off the same evening.

The general principles on which this strange government was conducted, deserve attention. The policy of Frederic was essentially the same as his father's; but Frederic, while

he carried that policy to lengths to which his father never thought of carrying it, cleared it at the same time from the absurdities with which his father had encumbered it. The King's first object was to have a great, efficient, and well-trained army. He had a kingdom which in extent and population was hardly in the second rank of European powers; and yet he aspired to a place not inferior to that of the sovereigns of England, France, and Austria. For that end it was necessary that Prussia should be all sting. Lewis XV., with five times as many subjects as Frederic, and more than five times as large a revenue, had not a more formidable army. The proportion which the soldiers in Prussia bore to the people seems hardly credible. Of the males in the vigour of life, a seventh part were probably under arms; and this great force had, by drilling, by reviewing, and by the unsparing use of cane and scourge, been taught to perform all evolutions with a rapidity and a precision which would have astonished Villars or Eugene. The elevated feelings which are necessary to the best kind of army were then wanting to the Prussian service. In those ranks were not found the religious and political enthusiasm which inspired the pikemen of Cromwell, the patriotic ardour, the thirst of glory, the devotion to a great leader, which inflamed the Old Guard of Napoleon. But in all the mechanical parts of the military calling, the Prussians were as superior to the English and French troops of that day, as the English and French troops to a rustic militia.

Though the pay of the Prussian soldier was small, though every rixdollar of extraordinary charge was scrutinized by Frederic with a vigilance and suspicion such as Mr. Joseph Hume never brought to the examination of an army estimate, the expense of such an establishment was, for the means of the country, enormous. In order that it might not be utterly

ruinous, it was necessary that every other expense should be cut down to the lowest possible point. Accordingly Frederic, though his dominions bordered on the sea, had no navy. He neither had nor wished to have colonies. His judges, his fiscal officers, were meanly paid. His ministers at foreign courts walked on foot, or drove shabby old carriages till the axle-trees gave way. Even to his highest diplomatic agents, who resided at London and Paris, he allowed less than a thousand pounds sterling a-year. The royal household was managed with a frugality unusual in the establishments of opulent subjects, unexampled in any other palace. The King loved good eating and drinking, and during great part of his life took pleasure in seeing his table surrounded by guests; yet the whole charge of his kitchen was brought within the sum of two thousand pounds sterling a-year. He examined every extraordinary item with a care which might be thought to suit the mistress of a boarding-house better than a great prince. When more than four rixdollars were asked of him for a hundred oysters, he stormed as if he had heard that one of his generals had sold a fortress to the Empress Queen. Not a bottle of champagne was uncorked without his express order. The game of the royal parks and forests, a serious head of expenditure in most kingdoms, was to him a source of profit. The whole was farmed out; and, though the farmers were almost ruined by their contract, the King would grant them no remission. His wardrobe consisted of one fine gala dress, which lasted him all his life; of two or three old coats fit for Monmouth Street, of yellow waistcoats soiled with snuff, and of huge boots embrowned by time. One taste alone sometimes allured him beyond the limits of parsimony, nay, even beyond the limits of prudence, the taste for building. In all other things his economy was such as we might call by a harsher name, if we did not reflect that

his funds were drawn from a heavily taxed people, and that it was impossible for him, without excessive tyranny, to keep up at once a formidable army and a splendid court.

Considered as an administrator, Frederic had undoubtedly many titles to praise. Order was strictly maintained throughout his dominions. Property was secure. A great liberty of speaking and of writing was allowed. Confident in the irresistible strength derived from a great army, the King looked down on malecontents and libellers with a wise disdain; and gave little encouragement to spies and informers. When he was told of the disaffection of one of his subjects, he merely asked, "How many thousand men can he bring into the field?" He once saw a crowd staring at something on a wall. He rode up, and found that the object of curiosity was a scurrilous placard against himself. The placard had been posted up so high that it was not easy to read it. Frederic ordered his attendants to take it down and put it lower. "My people and I," he said, "have come to an agreement which satisfies us both. They are to say what they please, and I am to do what I please." No person would have dared to publish in London satires on George II. approaching to the atrocity of those satires on Frederic, which the booksellers at Berlin sold with impunity. One bookseller sent to the palace a copy of the most stinging lampoon that perhaps was ever written in the world, the Memoirs of Voltaire, published by Beaumarchais, and asked for his majesty's orders. "Do not advertise it in an offensive manner," said the King; "but sell it by all means. I hope it will pay you well." Even among statesmen accustomed to the licence of a free press, such steadfastness of mind as this is not very common.

It is due also to the memory of Frederic to say, that he earnestly laboured to secure to his people the great blessing of cheap and speedy justice. He was one of the first rulers who

abolished the cruel and absurd practice of torture. No sentence of death, pronounced by the ordinary tribunals, was executed without his sanction; and his sanction, except in cases of murder, was rarely given. Towards his troops he acted in a very different manner. Military offences were punished with such barbarous scourging, that to be shot was considered by the Prussian soldier as a secondary punishment. Indeed, the principle which pervaded Frederic's whole policy was this, that the more severely the army is governed, the safer it is to treat the rest of the community with lenity.

Religious persecution was unknown under his government, unless some foolish and unjust restrictions which lay upon the Jews may be regarded as forming an exception. His policy with respect to the Catholics of Silesia presented an honourable contrast to the policy which, under very similar circumstances, England long followed with respect to the Catholics of Ireland. Every form of religion and irreligion found an asylum in his states. The scoffer whom the parliaments of France had sentenced to a cruel death, was consoled by a commission in the Prussian service. The Jesuit who could show his face nowhere else, who in Britain was still subject to penal laws, who was proscribed by France, Spain, Portugal, and Naples, who had been given up even by the Vatican, found safety and the means of subsistence in the Prussian dominions.

Most of the vices of Frederic's administration resolve themselves into one vice, the spirit of meddling. The indefatigable activity of his intellect, his dictatorial temper, his military habits, all inclined him to this great fault. He drilled his people as he drilled his grenadiers. Capital and industry were diverted from their natural direction by a crowd of preposterous regulations. There was a monopoly of coffee, a monopoly of tobacco, a monopoly of refined sugar. The

public money, of which the King was generally so sparing, was lavishly spent in ploughing bogs, in planting mulberry-trees amidst the sand, in bringing sheep from Spain to improve the Saxon wool, in bestowing prizes for fine yarn, in building manufactories of porcelain, manufactories of carpets, manufactories of hardware, manufactories of lace. Neither the experience of other rulers, nor his own, could ever teach him that something more than an edict and a grant of public money was required to create a Lyons, a Brussels, or a Birmingham.

For his commercial policy, however, there was some excuse. He had on his side illustrious examples and popular prejudice. Grievously as he erred, he erred in company with his age. In other departments his meddling was altogether without apology. He interfered with the course of justice as well as with the course of trade; and set up his own crude notions of equity against the law as expounded by the unanimous voice of the gravest magistrates. It never occurred to him that men whose lives were passed in adjudicating on questions of civil right, were more likely to form correct opinions on such questions than a prince whose attention was divided among a thousand objects, and who had never read a law-book through. The resistance opposed to him by the tribunals inflamed him to fury. He reviled his Chancellor. He kicked the shins of his Judges. He did not, it is true, intend to act unjustly. He firmly believed that he was doing right, and defending the cause of the poor against the wealthy. Yet this well-meant meddling probably did far more harm than all the explosions of his evil passions during the whole of his long reign. We could make shift to live under a debauchee or a tyrant; but to be ruled by a busybody is more than human nature can bear.

The same passion for directing and regulating appeared

in every part of the King's policy. Every lad of a certain station in life was forced to go to certain schools within the Prussian dominions. If a young Prussian repaired, though but for a few weeks, to Leyden or Gottingen for the purpose of study, the offence was punished with civil disabilities, and sometimes with the confiscation of property. Nobody was to travel without the royal permission. If the permission were granted, the pocket-money of the tourist was fixed by royal ordinance. A merchant might take with him two hundred and fifty rixdollars in gold, a noble was allowed to take four hundred; for it may be observed, in passing, that Frederic studiously kept up the old distinction between the nobles and the community. In speculation, he was a French philosopher, but in action, a German prince. He talked and wrote about the privileges of blood in the style of Sieyès; but in practice no chapter in the empire looked with a keener eye to genealogies and quarterings.

Such was Frederic the Ruler. But there was another Frederic, the Frederic of Rheinsberg, the fiddler and flute-player, the poetaster and metaphysician. Amidst the cares of state the King had retained his passion for music, for reading, for writing, for literary society. To these amusements he devoted all the time that he could snatch from the business of war and government; and perhaps more light is thrown on his character by what passed during his hours of relaxation, than by his battles or his laws.

It was the just boast of Schiller that, in his country, no Augustus, no Lorenzo, had watched over the infancy of poetry. The rich and energetic language of Luther, driven by the Latin from the schools of pedants, and by the French from the palaces of kings, had taken refuge among the people. Of the powers of that language Frederic had no notion. He generally spoke of it, and of those who used it,

with the contempt of ignorance. His library consisted of French books; at his table nothing was heard but French conversation. The associates of his hours of relaxation were, for the most part, foreigners. Britain furnished to the royal circle two distinguished men, born in the highest rank, and driven by civil dissensions from the land to which, under happier circumstances, their talents and virtues might have been a source of strength and glory. George Keith, Earl Marischal of Scotland, had taken arms for the house of Stuart in 1715; and his younger brother James, then only seventeen years old, had fought gallantly by his side. When all was lost they retired together to the Continent, roved from country to country, served under various standards, and so bore themselves as to win the respect and good-will of many who had no love for the Jacobite cause. Their long wanderings terminated at Potsdam; nor had Frederic any associates who deserved or obtained so large a share of his esteem. They were not only accomplished men, but nobles and warriors, capable of serving him in war and diplomacy, as well as of amusing him at supper. Alone of all his companions they appear never to have had reason to complain of his demeanour towards them. Some of those who knew the palace best, pronounced that Lord Marischal was the only human being Frederic ever really loved.

Italy sent to the parties at Potsdam the ingenious and amiable Algarotti, and Bastiani, the most crafty, cautious, and servile of Abbés. But the greater part of the society which Frederic had assembled round him was drawn from France. Maupertuis had acquired some celebrity by the journey which he had made to Lapland, for the purpose of ascertaining, by actual measurement, the shape of our planet. He was placed in the Chair of the Academy of Berlin, a humble imitation of the renowned academy of Paris.

Baculard D'Arnaud, a young poet, who was thought to have given promise of great things, had been induced to quit his country, and to reside at the Prussian Court. The Marquess D'Argens was among the King's favourite companions, on account, as it should seem, of the strong opposition between their characters. The parts of D'Argens were good, and his manners those of a finished French gentleman; but his whole soul was dissolved in sloth, timidity, and self-indulgence. His was one of that abject class of minds which are superstitious without being religious. Hating Christianity with a rancour which made him incapable of rational inquiry, unable to see in the harmony and beauty of the universe the traces of divine power and wisdom, he was the slave of dreams and omens, would not sit down to table with thirteen in company, turned pale if the salt fell towards him, begged his guests not to cross their knives and forks on their plates, and would not for the world commence a journey on Friday. His health was a subject of constant anxiety to him. Whenever his head ached, or his pulse beat quick, his dastardly fears and effeminate precautions were the jest of all Berlin. All this suited the King's purpose admirably. He wanted somebody by whom he might be amused, and whom he might despise. When he wished to pass half an hour in easy polished conversation, D'Argens was an excellent companion; when he wanted to vent his spleen and contempt, D'Argens was an excellent butt.

With these associates, and others of the same class, Frederic loved to spend the time which he could steal from public cares. He wished his supper-parties to be gay and easy. He invited his guests to lay aside all restraint, and to forget that he was at the head of a hundred and sixty thousand soldiers, and was absolute master of the life and liberty of all who sat at meat with him. There was, therefore, at

these parties the outward show of ease. The wit and learning of the company were ostentatiously displayed. The discussions on history and literature were often highly interesting. But the absurdity of all the religions known among men was the chief topic of conversation; and the audacity with which doctrines and names venerated throughout Christendom were treated on these occasions, startled even persons accustomed to the society of French and English freethinkers. Real liberty, however, or real affection, was in this brilliant society not to be found. Absolute kings seldom have friends: and Frederic's faults were such as, even where perfect equality exists, make friendship exceedingly precarious. He had indeed many qualities, which, on a first acquaintance, were captivating. His conversation was lively; his manners, to those whom he desired to please, were even caressing. No man succeeded more completely in inspiring those who approached him with vague hopes of some great advantage from his kindness. But under this fair exterior he was a tyrant, suspicious, disdainful, and malevolent. He had one taste which may be pardoned in a boy, but which, when habitually and deliberately indulged by a man of mature age and strong understanding, is almost invariably the sign of a bad heart, a taste for severe practical jokes. If a courtier was fond of dress, oil was flung over his richest suit. If he was fond of money, some prank was invented to make him disburse more than he could spare. If he was hypochondriacal, he was made to believe that he had the dropsy. If he had particularly set his heart on visiting a place, a letter was forged to frighten him from going thither. These things, it may be said, are trifles. They are so; but they are indications, not to be mistaken, of a nature to which the sight of human suffering and human degradation is an agreeable excitement.

Frederic had a keen eye for the foibles of others, and loved to communicate his discoveries. He had some talent for sarcasm, and considerable skill in detecting the sore places where sarcasm would be most acutely felt. His vanity, as well as his malignity, found gratification in the vexation and confusion of those who smarted under his caustic jests. Yet in truth his success on these occasions belonged quite as much to the king as to the wit. We read that Commodus descended, sword in hand, into the arena against a wretched gladiator, armed only with a foil of lead, and, after shedding the blood of the helpless victim, struck medals to commemorate the inglorious victory. The triumphs of Frederic in the war of repartee were of much the same kind. How to deal with him was the most puzzling of questions. To appear constrained in his presence was to disobey his commands, and to spoil his amusement. Yet if his associates were enticed by his graciousness to indulge in the familiarity of a cordial intimacy, he was certain to make them repent of their presumption by some cruel humiliation. To resent his affronts was perilous; yet not to resent them was to deserve and to invite them. In his view, those who mutinied were insolent and ungrateful; those who submitted were curs made to receive bones and kickings with the same fawning patience. It is, indeed, difficult to conceive how any thing short of the rage of hunger should have induced men to bear the misery of being the associates of the Great King. It was no lucrative post. His majesty was as severe and economical in his friendships as in the other charges of his establishment, and as unlikely to give a rixdollar too much for his dinners. The sum which he allowed to a poet or a philosopher was the very smallest sum for which such poet or philosopher could be induced to sell himself into slavery; and the bondsman might think himself fortunate, if what had been so grudgingly given was

not, after years of suffering, rudely and arbitrarily withdrawn.

Potsdam was, in truth, what it was called by one of its most illustrious inmates, the Palace of Alcina. At the first glance it seemed to be a delightful spot, where every intellectual and physical enjoyment awaited the happy adventurer. Every new-comer was received with eager hospitality, intoxicated with flattery, encouraged to expect prosperity and greatness. It was in vain that a long succession of favourites who had entered that abode with delight and hope, and who, after a short term of delusive happiness, had been doomed to expiate their folly by years of wretchedness and degradation, raised their voices to warn the aspirant who approached the charmed threshold. Some had wisdom enough to discover the truth early, and spirit enough to fly without looking back; others lingered on to a cheerless and unhonoured old age. We have no hesitation in saying that the poorest author of that time in London, sleeping on a bulk, dining in a cellar, with a cravat of paper, and a skewer for a shirt-pin, was a happier man than any of the literary inmates of Frederic's court.

But of all who entered the enchanted garden in the inebriation of delight, and quitted it in agonies of rage and shame, the most remarkable was Voltaire. Many circumstances had made him desirous of finding a home at a distance from his country. His fame had raised him up enemies. His sensibility gave them a formidable advantage over him. They were, indeed, contemptible assailants. Of all that they wrote against him, nothing has survived except what he has himself preserved. But the constitution of his mind resembled the constitution of those bodies in which the slightest scratch of a bramble, or the bite of a gnat, never fails to fester. Though his reputation was rather raised than lowered by the abuse

of such writers as Fréron and Desfontaines, though the vengeance which he took on Fréron and Desfontaines was such, that scourging, branding, pillorying, would have been a trifle to it, there is reason to believe that they gave him far more pain than he ever gave them. Though he enjoyed during his own lifetime the reputation of a classic, though he was extolled by his contemporaries above all poets, philosophers, and historians, though his works were read with as much delight and admiration at Moscow and Westminster, at Florence and Stockholm, as at Paris itself, he was yet tormented by that restless jealousy which should seem to belong only to minds burning with the desire of fame, and yet conscious of impotence. To men of letters who could by no possibility be his rivals, he was, if they behaved well to him, not merely just, not merely courteous, but often a hearty friend and a munificent benefactor. But to every writer who rose to a celebrity approaching his own, he became either a disguised or an avowed enemy. He slily depreciated Montesquieu and Buffon. He publicly, and with violent outrage, made war on Rousseau. Nor had he the art of hiding his feelings under the semblance of good humour or of contempt. With all his great talents, and all his long experience of the world, he had no more self-command than a petted child or a hysterical woman. Whenever he was mortified, he exhausted the whole rhetoric of anger and sorrow to express his mortification. His torrents of bitter words, his stamping and cursing, his grimaces and his tears of rage, were a rich feast to those abject natures, whose delight is in the agonies of powerful spirits and in the abasement of immortal names. These creatures had now found out a way of galling him to the very quick. In one work, at least, it had been admitted by envy itself that he was without a living competitor. Since Racine had been laid among the

great men whose dust made the holy precinct of Port-Royal holier, no tragic poet had appeared who could contest the palm with the author of Zaire, of Alzire, and of Merope. At length a rival was announced. Old Crébillon, who, many years before, had obtained some theatrical success, and who had long been forgotten, came forth from his garret in one of the meanest lanes near the Rue St. Antoine, and was welcomed by the acclamations of envious men of letters, and of a capricious populace. A thing called Catiline, which he had written in his retirement, was acted with boundless applause. Of this execrable piece it is sufficient to say, that the plot turns on a love affair, carried on in all the forms of Scudery, between Catiline, whose confidant is the Prætor Lentulus, and Tullia, the daughter of Cicero. The theatre resounded with acclamations. The king pensioned the successful poet; and the coffeehouses pronounced that Voltaire was a clever man, but that the real tragic inspiration, the celestial fire which had glowed in Corneille and Racine, was to be found in Crébillon alone.

The blow went to Voltaire's heart. Had his wisdom and fortitude been in proportion to the fertility of his intellect, and to the brilliancy of his wit, he would have seen that it was out of the power of all the puffers and detractors in Europe to put Catiline above Zaire; but he had none of the magnanimous patience with which Milton and Bentley left their claims to the unerring judgment of time. He eagerly engaged in an undignified competition with Crébillon, and produced a series of plays on the same subjects which his rival had treated. These pieces were coolly received. Angry with the court, angry with the capital, Voltaire began to find pleasure in the prospect of exile. His attachment for Madame du Châtelet long prevented him from executing his

purpose. Her death set him at liberty; and he determined to take refuge at Berlin.

To Berlin he was invited by a series of letters couched in terms of the most enthusiastic friendship and admiration. For once the rigid parsimony of Frederic seemed to have relaxed. Orders, honourable offices, a liberal pension, a well-served table, stately apartments under a royal roof, were offered in return for the pleasure and honour which were expected from the society of the first wit of the age. A thousand louis were remitted for the charges of the journey. No ambassador setting out from Berlin for a court of the first rank had ever been more amply supplied. But Voltaire was not satisfied. At a later period, when he possessed an ample fortune, he was one of the most liberal of men; but till his means had become equal to his wishes, his greediness for lucre was unrestrained either by justice or by shame. He had the effrontery to ask for a thousand louis more, in order to enable him to bring his niece, Madame Denis, the ugliest of coquettes, in his company. The indelicate rapacity of the poet produced its natural effect on the severe and frugal King. The answer was a dry refusal. "I did not," said his Majesty, "solicit the honour of the lady's society." On this, Voltaire went off into a paroxysm of childish rage. "Was there ever such avarice! He has hundreds of tubs full of dollars in his vaults, and haggles with me about a poor thousand louis." It seemed that the negotiation would be broken off; but Frederic, with great dexterity, affected indifference, and seemed inclined to transfer his idolatry to Baculard d'Arnaud. His Majesty even wrote some bad verses, of which the sense was, that Voltaire was a setting sun, and that Arnaud was rising. Good-natured friends soon carried the lines to Voltaire. He was in his bed. He jumped out in his shirt,

danced about the room with rage, and sent for his passport and his post-horses. It was not difficult to foresee the end of a connexion which had such a beginning.

It was in the year 1750 that Voltaire left the great capital, which he was not to see again till, after the lapse of near thirty years, he returned, bowed down by extreme old age, to die in the midst of a splendid and ghastly triumph. His reception in Prussia was such as might well have elated a less vain and excitable mind. He wrote to his friends at Paris, that the kindness and the attention with which he had been welcomed surpassed description, that the King was the most amiable of men, that Potsdam was the paradise of philosophers. He was created chamberlain, and received together with his gold key, the cross of an order, and a patent ensuring to him a pension of eight hundred pounds sterling a year for life. A hundred and sixty pounds a year were promised to his niece if she survived him. The royal cooks and coachmen were put at his disposal. He was lodged in the same apartments in which Saxe had lived, when, at the height of power and glory, he visited Prussia. Frederic, indeed, stooped for a time even to use the language of adulation. He pressed to his lips the meagre hand of the little grinning skeleton, whom he regarded as the dispenser of immortal renown. He would add, he said, to the titles which he owed to his ancestors and his sword, another title, derived from his last and proudest acquisition. His style should run thus: — Frederic, King of Prussia, Margrave of Brandenburg, Sovereign Duke of Silesia, Possessor of Voltaire. But even amidst the delights of the honeymoon, Voltaire's sensitive vanity began to take alarm. A few days after his arrival, he could not help telling his niece that the amiable King had a trick of giving a sly scratch with one hand, while patting and stroking with the other. Soon came hints not

the less alarming, because mysterious. "The supper parties are delicious. The King is the life of the company. But — I have operas and comedies, reviews and concerts, my studies and books. But — but — Berlin is fine, the princesses charming, the maids of honour handsome. But" —

This eccentric friendship was fast cooling. Never had there met two persons so exquisitely fitted to plague each other. Each of them had exactly the fault of which the other was most impatient; and they were, in different ways, the most impatient of mankind. Frederic was frugal, almost niggardly. When he had secured his plaything, he began to think that he had bought it too dear. Voltaire, on the other hand, was greedy, even to the extent of impudence and knavery; and conceived that the favourite of a monarch, who had barrels full of gold and silver laid up in cellars, ought to make a fortune which a receiver-general might envy. They soon discovered each other's feelings. Both were angry; and a war began, in which Frederic stooped to the part of Harpagon, and Voltaire to that of Scapin. It is humiliating to relate, that the great warrior and statesman gave orders that his guest's allowance of sugar and chocolate should be curtailed. It is, if possible, a still more humiliating fact, that Voltaire indemnified himself by pocketing the wax-candles in the royal antechamber. Disputes about money, however, were not the most serious disputes of these extra-ordinary associates. The sarcasms of the King soon galled the sensitive temper of the poet. D'Arnaud and D'Argens, Guichard and La Métrie, might, for the sake of a morsel of bread, be willing to bear the insolence of a master; but Voltaire was of another order. He knew that he was a potentate as well as Frederic, that his European reputation, and his incomparable power of covering whatever he hated with ridicule, made him an object of dread even to the

leaders of armies and the rulers of nations. In truth, of all the intellectual weapons which have ever been wielded by man, the most terrible was the mockery of Voltaire. Bigots and tyrants, who had never been moved by the wailing and cursing of millions, turned pale at his name. Principles unassailable by reason, principles which had withstood the fiercest attacks of power, the most valuable truths, the most generous sentiments, the noblest and most graceful images, the purest reputations, the most august institutions, began to look mean and loathsome as soon as that withering smile was turned upon them. To every opponent, however strong in his cause and his talents, in his station and his character, who ventured to encounter the great scoffer, might be addressed the caution which was given of old to the Archangel: —

> "I forewarn thee shun
> His deadly arrow; neither vainly hope
> To be invulnerable in those bright arms,
> Though temper'd heavenly; for that fatal dint,
> Save Him who reigns above, none can resist."

We cannot pause to recount how often that rare talent was exercised against rivals worthy of esteem; how often it was used to crush and torture enemies worthy only of silent disdain; how often it was perverted to the more noxious purpose of destroying the last solace of earthly misery, and the last restraint on earthly power. Neither can we pause to tell how often it was used to vindicate justice, humanity, and toleration, the principles of sound philosophy, the principles of free government. This is not the place for a full character of Voltaire.

Causes of quarrel multiplied fast. Voltaire, who, partly from love of money, and partly from love of excitement, was always fond of stockjobbing, became implicated in trans-

actions of at least a dubious character. The King was delighted at having such an opportunity to humble his guest; and bitter reproaches and complaints were exchanged. Voltaire, too, was soon at war with the other men of letters who surrounded the King; and this irritated Frederic, who, however, had himself chiefly to blame: for, from that love of tormenting which was in him a ruling passion, he perpetually lavished extravagant praises on small men and bad books, merely in order that he might enjoy the mortification and rage which on such occasions Voltaire took no pains to conceal. His majesty, however, soon had reason to regret the pains which he had taken to kindle jealousy among the members of his household. The whole palace was in a ferment with literary intrigues and cabals. It was to no purpose that the imperial voice, which kept a hundred and sixty thousand soldiers in order, was raised to quiet the contention of the exasperated wits. It was far easier to stir up such a storm than to lull it. Nor was Frederic, in his capacity of wit, by any means without his own share of vexations. He had sent a large quantity of verses to Voltaire, and requested that they might be returned, with remarks and corrections. "See," exclaimed Voltaire, "what a quantity of his dirty linen the King has sent me to wash!" Tale-bearers were not wanting to carry the sarcasm to the royal ear; and Frederic was as much incensed as a Grub Street writer who had found his name in the Dunciad.

This could not last. A circumstance which, when the mutual regard of the friends was in its first glow, would merely have been matter for laughter, produced a violent explosion. Maupertuis enjoyed as much of Frederic's good-will as any man of letters. He was President of the Academy of Berlin; and he stood second to Voltaire, though at an immense distance, in the literary society which had been assembled at

the Prussian court. Frederic had, by playing for his own amusement on the feelings of the two jealous and vain-glorious Frenchmen, succeeded in producing a bitter enmity between them. Voltaire resolved to set his mark, a mark never to be effaced, on the forehead of Maupertuis, and wrote the exquisitely ludicrous Diatribe of Doctor Akakia. He showed this little piece to Frederic, who had too much taste and too much malice not to relish such delicious pleasantry. In truth, even at this time of day, it is not easy for any person who has the least perception of the ridiculous to read the jokes on the Latin city, the Patagonians, and the hole to the centre of the earth, without laughing till he cries. But though Frederic was diverted by this charming pasquinade, he was unwilling that it should get abroad. His self-love was interested. He had selected Maupertuis to fill the chair of his Academy. If all Europe were taught to laugh at Maupertuis, would not the reputation of the Academy, would not even the dignity of its royal patron, be in some degree compromised? The King, therefore, begged Voltaire to suppress this performance. Voltaire promised to do so, and broke his word. The Diatribe was published, and received with shouts of merriment and applause by all who could read the French language. The King stormed. Voltaire, with his usual disregard of truth, asserted his innocence, and made up some lie about a printer or an amanuensis. The King was not to be so imposed upon. He ordered the pamphlet to be burned by the common hangman, and insisted upon having an apology from Voltaire, couched in the most abject terms. Voltaire sent back to the King his cross, his key, and the patent of his pension. After this burst of rage, the strange pair began to be ashamed of their violence, and went through the forms of reconciliation. But the breach was irreparable; and Voltaire took his leave of Frederic for

ever. They parted with cold civility; but their hearts were big with resentment. Voltaire had in his keeping a volume of the King's poetry, and forgot to return it. This was, we believe, merely one of the oversights which men setting out upon a journey often commit. That Voltaire could have meditated plagiarism is quite incredible. He would not, we are confident, for the half of Frederic's kingdom, have consented to father Frederic's verses. The King, however, who rated his own writings much above their value, and who was inclined to see all Voltaire's actions in the worst light, was enraged to think that his favourite compositions were in the hands of an enemy, as thievish as a daw and as mischievous as a monkey. In the anger excited by this thought, he lost sight of reason and decency, and determined on committing an outrage at once odious and ridiculous.

Voltaire had reached Frankfort. His niece, Madame Denis, came thither to meet him. He conceived himself secure from the power of his late master, when he was arrested by order of the Prussian resident. The precious volume was delivered up. But the Prussian agents had, no doubt, been instructed not to let Voltaire escape without some gross indignity. He was confined twelve days in a wretched hovel. Sentinels with fixed bayonets kept guard over him. His niece was dragged through the mire by the soldiers. Sixteen hundred dollars were extorted from him by his insolent jailers. It is absurd to say that this outrage is not to be attributed to the King. Was any body punished for it? Was any body called in question for it? Was it not consistent with Frederic's character? Was it not of a piece with his conduct on other similar occasions? Is it not notorious that he repeatedly gave private directions to his officers to pillage and demolish the houses of persons against whom he had a grudge, charging them at the same time to take their measures

in such a way that his name might not be compromised? He acted thus towards Count Brühl in the Seven Years' War. Why should we believe that he would have been more scrupulous with regard to Voltaire?

When at length the illustrious prisoner regained his liberty, the prospect before him was but dreary. He was an exile both from the country of his birth and from the country of his adoption. The French government had taken offence at his journey to Prussia, and would not permit him to return to Paris; and in the vicinity of Prussia it was not safe for him to remain.

He took refuge on the beautiful shores of Lake Leman. There, loosed from every tie which had hitherto restrained him, and having little to hope or to fear from courts and churches, he began his long war against all that, whether for good or evil, had authority over man; for what Burke said of the Constituent Assembly, was eminently true of this its great forerunner: — Voltaire could not build: he could only pull down: he was the very Vitruvius of ruin. He has bequeathed to us not a single doctrine to be called by his name, not a single addition to the stock of our positive knowledge. But no human teacher ever left behind him so vast and terrible a wreck of truths and falsehoods, of things noble and things base, of things useful and things pernicious. From the time when his sojourn beneath the Alps commenced, the dramatist, the wit, the historian, was merged in a more important character. He was now the patriarch, the founder of a sect, the chief of a conspiracy, the prince of a wide intellectual commonwealth. He often enjoyed a pleasure dear to the better part of his nature, the pleasure of vindicating innocence which had no other helper, of repairing cruel wrongs, of punishing tyranny in high places. He had also the satisfaction, not less acceptable to his ravenous vanity, of hearing

terrified Capuchins call him the Antichrist. But whether employed in works of benevolence, or in works of mischief, he never forgot Potsdam and Frankfort; and he listened anxiously to every murmur which indicated that a tempest was gathering in Europe, and that his vengeance was at hand.

He soon had his wish. Maria Theresa had never for a moment forgotten the great wrong which she had received at the hand of Frederic. Young and delicate, just left an orphan, just about to be a mother, she had been compelled to fly from the ancient capital of her race; she had seen her fair inheritance dismembered by robbers, and of those robbers he had been the foremost. Without a pretext, without a provocation, in defiance of the most sacred engagements, he had attacked the helpless ally whom he was bound to defend. The Empress Queen had the faults as well as the virtues which are connected with quick sensibility and a high spirit. There was no peril which she was not ready to brave, no calamity which she was not ready to bring on her subjects, or on the whole human race, if only she might once taste the sweetness of a complete revenge. Revenge, too, presented itself, to her narrow and superstitious mind, in the guise of duty. Silesia had been wrested not only from the House of Austria, but from the Church of Rome. The conqueror had indeed permitted his new subjects to worship God after their own fashion; but this was not enough. To bigotry it seemed an intolerable hardship that the Catholic Church, having long enjoyed ascendency, should be compelled to content itself with equality. Nor was this the only circumstance which led Maria Theresa to regard her enemy as the enemy of God. The profaneness of Frederic's writings and conversation, and the frightful rumours which were circulated respecting the immorality of his private life, naturally shocked

a woman who believed with the firmest faith all that her confessor told her, and who, though surrounded by temptations, though young and beautiful, though ardent in all her passions, though possessed of absolute power, had preserved her fame unsullied even by the breath of slander.

To recover Silesia, to humble the dynasty of Hohenzollern to the dust, was the great object of her life. She toiled during many years for this end, with zeal as indefatigable as that which the poet ascribes to the stately goddess who tired out her immortal horses in the work of raising the nations against Troy, and who offered to give up to destruction her darling Sparta and Mycenæ, if only she might once see the smoke going up from the palace of Priam. With even such a spirit did the proud Austrian Juno strive to array against her foe a coalition such as Europe had never seen. Nothing would content her but that the whole civilized world, from the White Sea to the Adriatic, from the Bay of Biscay to the pastures of the wild horses of the Tanais, should be combined in arms against one petty state.

She early succeeded by various arts in obtaining the adhesion of Russia. An ample share of spoil was promised to the King of Poland; and that prince, governed by his favourite, Count Brühl, readily promised the assistance of the Saxon forces. The great difficulty was with France. That the Houses of Bourbon and of Hapsburg should ever cordially co-operate in any great scheme of European policy, had long been thought, to use the strong expression of Frederic, just as impossible as that fire and water should amalgamate. The whole history of the Continent, during two centuries and a half, had been the history of the mutual jealousies and enmities of France and Austria. Since the administration of Richelieu, above all, it had been considered

as the plain policy of the Most Christian King to thwart on all occasions the Court of Vienna, and to protect every member of the Germanic body who stood up against the dictation of the Cæsars. Common sentiments of religion had been unable to mitigate this strong antipathy. The rulers of France, even while clothed in the Roman purple, even while persecuting the heretics of Rochelle and Auvergne, had still looked with favour on the Lutheran and Calvinistic princes who were struggling against the chief of the empire. If the French ministers paid any respect to the traditional rules handed down to them through many generations, they would have acted towards Frederic as the greatest of their predecessors acted towards Gustavus Adolphus. That there was deadly enmity between Prussia and Austria was of itself a sufficient reason for close friendship between Prussia and France. With France Frederic could never have any serious controversy. His territories were so situated that his ambition, greedy and unscrupulous as it was, could never impel him to attack her of his own accord. He was more than half a Frenchman: he wrote, spoke, read nothing but French: he delighted in French society: the admiration of the French he proposed to himself as the best reward of all his exploits. It seemed incredible that any French government, however notorious for levity or stupidity, could spurn away such an ally.

The Court of Vienna, however, did not despair. The Austrian diplomatists propounded a new scheme of politics, which, it must be owned, was not altogether without plausibility. The great powers, according to this theory, had long been under a delusion. They had looked on each other as natural enemies, while in truth they were natural allies. A succession of cruel wars had devastated Europe, had thinned the population, had exhausted the public resources,

had loaded governments with an immense burden of debt; and when, after two hundred years of murderous hostility or of hollow truce, the illustrious Houses whose enmity had distracted the world sat down to count their gains, to what did the real advantage on either side amount? Simply to this, that they had kept each other from thriving. It was not the King of France, it was not the Emperor, who had reaped the fruits of the Thirty Years' War, or of the War of the Pragmatic Sanction. Those fruits had been pilfered by states of the second and third rank, which, secured against jealousy by their insignificance, had dexterously aggrandized themselves while pretending to serve the animosity of the great chiefs of Christendom. While the lion and tiger were tearing each other, the jackal had run off into the jungle with the prey. The real gainer by the Thirty Years' War had been neither France nor Austria, but Sweden. The real gainer by the war of the Pragmatic Sanction had been neither France nor Austria, but the upstart of Brandenburg. France had made great efforts, had added largely to her military glory, and largely to her public burdens; and for what end? Merely that Frederic might rule Silesia. For this and this alone one French army, wasted by sword and famine, had perished in Bohemia; and another had purchased, with floods of the noblest blood, the barren glory of Fontenoy. And this prince, for whom France had suffered so much, was he a grateful, was he even an honest ally? Had he not been as false to the Court of Versailles as to the Court of Vienna? Had he not played, on a large scale, the same part which, in private life, is played by the vile agent of chicane who sets his neighbours quarrelling, involves them in costly and interminable litigation, and betrays them to each other all round, certain that, whoever may be ruined, he shall be enriched? Surely the true wisdom of the great powers was to attack, not each

other, but this common barrator, who, by inflaming the passions of both, by pretending to serve both, and by deserting both, had raised himself above the station to which he was born. The great object of Austria was to regain Silesia; the great object of France was to obtain an accession of territory on the side of Flanders. If they took opposite sides, the result would probably be that, after a war of many years, after the slaughter of many thousands of brave men, after the waste of many millions of crowns, they would lay down their arms without having achieved either object; but, if they came to an understanding, there would be no risk, and no difficulty. Austria would willingly make in Belgium such cessions as France could not expect to obtain by ten pitched battles. Silesia would easily be annexed to the monarchy of which it had long been a part. The union of two such powerful governments would at once overawe the King of Prussia. If he resisted, one short campaign would settle his fate. France and Austria, long accustomed to rise from the game of war both losers, would, for the first time, both be gainers. There could be no room for jealousy between them. The power of both would be increased at once; the equilibrium between them would be preserved; and the only sufferer would be a mischievous and unprincipled bucanier, who deserved no tenderness from either.

These doctrines, attractive from their novelty and ingenuity, soon became fashionable at the supper-parties and in the coffeehouses of Paris, and were espoused by every gay marquis and every facetious abbé who was admitted to see Madame de Pompadour's hair curled and powdered. It was not, however, to any political theory that the strange coalition between France and Austria owed its origin. The real motive which induced the great continental powers to forget their old animosities and their old state maxims, was

personal aversion to the King of Prussia. This feeling was strongest in Maria Theresa; but it was by no means confined to her. Frederic, in some respects a good master, was emphatically a bad neighbour. That he was hard in all dealings, and quick to take all advantages, was not his most odious fault. His bitter and scoffing speech had inflicted keener wounds than his ambition. In his character of wit he was under less restraint than even in his character of ruler. Satirical verses against all the princes and ministers of Europe were ascribed to his pen. In his letters and conversation he alluded to the greatest potentates of the age in terms which would have better suited Collé, in a war of repartee with young Crébillon at Pelletier's table, than a great sovereign speaking of great sovereigns. About women he was in the habit of expressing himself in a manner which it was impossible for the meekest of women to forgive; and, unfortunately for him, almost the whole Continent was then governed by women who were by no means conspicuous for meekness. Maria Theresa herself had not escaped his scurrilous jests. The Empress Elizabeth of Russia knew that her gallantries afforded him a favourite theme for ribaldry and invective. Madame de Pompadour, who was really the head of the French government, had been even more keenly galled. She had attempted, by the most delicate flattery, to propitiate the King of Prussia; but her messages had drawn from him only dry and sarcastic replies. The Empress Queen took a very different course. Though the haughtiest of princesses, though the most austere of matrons, she forgot in her thirst for revenge both the dignity of her race and the purity of her character, and condescended to flatter the low-born and low-minded concubine, who, having acquired influence by prostituting herself, retained it by prostituting others. Maria Theresa actually wrote with her own hand a note, full of ex-

pressions of esteem and friendship, to her dear cousin, the daughter of the butcher Poisson, the wife of the publican D'Etioles, the kidnapper of young girls for the harem of an old rake, a strange cousin for the descendant of so many Emperors of the West! The mistress was completely gained over, and easily carried her point with Lewis, who had, indeed, wrongs of his own to resent. His feelings were not quick; but contempt, says the eastern proverb, pierces even through the shell of the tortoise; and neither prudence nor decorum had ever restrained Frederic from expressing his measureless contempt for the sloth, the imbecility, and the baseness of Lewis. France was thus induced to join the coalition; and the example of France determined the conduct of Sweden, then completely subject to French influence.

The enemies of Frederic were surely strong enough to attack him openly; but they were desirous to add to all their other advantages the advantage of a surprise. He was not, however, a man to be taken off his guard. He had tools in every court; and he now received from Vienna, from Dresden, and from Paris, accounts so circumstantial and so consistent, that he could not doubt of his danger. He learnt, that he was to be assailed at once by France, Austria, Russia, Saxony, Sweden, and the Germanic body; that the greater part of his dominions was to be portioned out among his enemies; that France, which from her geographical position could not directly share in his spoils, was to receive an equivalent in the Netherlands; that Austria was to have Silesia, and the Czarina East Prussia; that Augustus of Saxony expected Magdeburg; and that Sweden would be rewarded with part of Pomerania. If these designs succeeded, the house of Brandenburg would at once sink in the European system to a place lower than that of the Duke of Wurtemburg or the Margrave of Baden.

And what hope was there that these designs would fail? No such union of the continental powers had been seen for ages. A less formidable confederacy had in a week conquered all the provinces of Venice, when Venice was at the height of power, wealth, and glory. A less formidable confederacy had compelled Lewis the Fourteenth to bow down his haughty head to the very earth. A less formidable confederacy has, within our own memory, subjugated a still mightier empire, and abased a still prouder name. Such odds had never been heard of in war. The people whom Frederic ruled were not five millions. The population of the countries which were leagued against him amounted to a hundred millions. The disproportion in wealth was at least equally great. Small communities, actuated by strong sentiments of patriotism or loyalty, have sometimes made head against great monarchies weakened by factions and discontents. But, small as was Frederic's kingdom, it probably contained a greater number of disaffected subjects than were to be found in all the states of his enemies. Silesia formed a fourth part of his dominions; and from the Silesians, born under Austrian princes, the utmost that he could expect was apathy. From the Silesian Catholics he could hardly expect any thing but resistance.

Some states have been enabled, by their geographical position, to defend themselves with advantage against immense force. The sea has repeatedly protected England against the fury of the whole continent. The Venetian government, driven from its possessions on the land, could still bid defiance to the confederates of Cambray from the Arsenal amidst the lagoons. More than one great and well-appointed army, which regarded the shepherds of Switzerland as an easy prey, has perished in the passes of the Alps. Frederic had no such advantage. The form of his states, their situation, the nature of the ground, all were against him. His long, scattered,

straggling territory, seemed to have been shaped with an express view to the convenience of invaders, and was protected by no sea, by no chain of hills. Scarcely any corner of it was a week's march from the territory of the enemy. The capital itself, in the event of war, would be constantly exposed to insult. In truth there was hardly a politician or a soldier in Europe who doubted that the conflict would be terminated in a very few days by the prostration of the house of Brandenburg.

Nor was Frederic's own opinion very different. He anticipated nothing short of his own ruin, and of the ruin of his family. Yet there was still a chance, a slender chance, of escape. His states had at least the advantage of a central position; his enemies were widely separated from each other, and could not conveniently unite their overwhelming forces on one point. They inhabited different climates, and it was probable that the season of the year which would be best suited to the military operations of one portion of the league, would be unfavourable to those of another portion. The Prussian monarchy, too, was free from some infirmities which were found in empires far more extensive and magnificent. Its effective strength for a desperate struggle was not to be measured merely by the number of square miles or the number of people. In that spare but well-knit and well-exercised body, there was nothing but sinew, and muscle, and bone. No public creditors looked for dividends. No distant colonies required defence. No court, filled with flatterers and mistresses, devoured the pay of fifty battalions. The Prussian army, though far inferior in number to the troops which were about to be opposed to it, was yet strong out of all proportion to the extent of the Prussian dominions. It was also admirably trained and admirably officered, accustomed to obey and accustomed to conquer. The revenue was not only unincum-

bered by debt, but exceeded the ordinary outlay in time of peace. Alone of all the European princes, Frederic had a treasure laid up for a day of difficulty. Above all, he was one, and his enemies were many. In their camps would certainly be found the jealousy, the dissension, the slackness, inseparable from coalitions; on his side was the energy, the unity, the secresy of a strong dictatorship. To a certain extent the deficiency of military means might be supplied by the resources of military art. Small as the King's army was, when compared with the six hundred thousand men whom the confederates could bring into the field, celerity of movement might in some degree compensate for deficiency of bulk. It was thus just possible that genius, judgment, resolution, and good-luck united, might protract the struggle during a campaign or two; and to gain even a month was of importance. It could not be long before the vices which are found in all extensive confederacies would begin to show themselves. Every member of the league would think his own share of the war too large, and his own share of the spoils too small. Complaints and recriminations would abound. The Turk might stir on the Danube; the statesmen of France might discover the error which they had committed in abandoning the fundamental principles of their national policy. Above all, death might rid Prussia of its most formidable enemies. The war was the effect of the personal aversion with which three or four sovereigns regarded Frederic; and the decease of any one of those sovereigns might produce a complete revolution in the state of Europe.

In the midst of a horizon generally dark and stormy, Frederic could discern one bright spot. The peace which had been concluded between England and France in 1748, had been in Europe no more than an armistice; and had not even been an armistice in the other quarters of the globe. In India

the sovereignty of the Carnatic was disputed between two great Mussulman houses; Fort Saint George had taken one side, Pondicherry the other; and in a series of battles and sieges the troops of Lawrence and Clive had been opposed to those of Dupleix. A struggle less important in its consequences, but not less likely to produce irritation, was carried on between those French and English adventurers, who kidnapped negroes and collected gold dust on the coast of Guinea. But it was in North America that the emulation and mutual aversion of the two nations were most conspicuous. The French attempted to hem in the English colonists by a chain of military posts, extending from the Great Lakes to the mouth of the Mississippi. The English took arms. The wild aboriginal tribes appeared on each side mingled with the Pale Faces. Battles were fought; forts were stormed; and hideous stories about stakes, scalpings, and death-songs reached Europe, and inflamed that national animosity which the rivalry of ages had produced. The disputes between France and England came to a crisis at the very time when the tempest which had been gathering was about to burst on Prussia. The tastes and interests of Frederic would have led him, if he had been allowed an option, to side with the house of Bourbon. But the folly of the Court of Versailles left him no choice. France became the tool of Austria; and Frederic was forced to become the ally of England. He could not, indeed, expect that a power which covered the sea with its fleets, and which had to make war at once on the Ohio and the Ganges, would be able to spare a large number of troops for operations in Germany. But England, though poor compared with the England of our time, was far richer than any country on the Continent. The amount of her revenue, and the resources which she found in her credit, though they may be thought small by a generation which has seen her raise a

hundred and thirty millions in a single year, appeared miraculous to the politicians of that age. A very moderate portion of her wealth, expended by an able and economical prince, in a country where prices were low, would be sufficient to equip and maintain a formidable army.

Such was the situation in which Frederic found himself. He saw the whole extent of his peril. He saw that there was still a faint possibility of escape; and, with prudent temerity, he determined to strike the first blow. It was in the month of August 1756, that the great war of the Seven Years commenced. The King demanded of the Empress Queen a distinct explanation of her intentions, and plainly told her that he should consider a refusal as a declaration of war. "I want," he said, "no answer in the style of an oracle." He received an answer at once haughty and evasive. In an instant the rich electorate of Saxony was overflowed by sixty thousand Prussian troops. Augustus with his army occupied a strong position at Pirna. The Queen of Poland was at Dresden. In a few days Pirna was blockaded and Dresden was taken. The first object of Frederic was to obtain possession of the Saxon State Papers; for those papers, he well knew, contained ample proofs that, though apparently an aggressor, he was really acting in self-defence. The Queen of Poland, as well acquainted as Frederic with the importance of those documents, had packed them up, had concealed them in her bed-chamber, and was about to send them off to Warsaw, when a Prussian officer made his appearance. In the hope that no soldier would venture to outrage a lady, a queen, the daughter of an emperor, the mother-in-law of a dauphin, she placed herself before the trunk, and at length sat down on it. But all resistance was vain. The papers were carried to Frederic, who found in them, as he expected, abundant evidence of the designs of the coalition. The most important

documents were instantly published, and the effect of the publication was great. It was clear that, of whatever sins the King of Prussia might formerly have been guilty, he was now the injured party, and had merely anticipated a blow intended to destroy him.

The Saxon camp at Pirna was in the mean time closely invested; but the besieged were not without hopes of succour. A great Austrian army under Marshal Brown was about to pour through the passes which separate Bohemia from Saxony. Frederic left at Pirna a force sufficient to deal with the Saxons, hastened into Bohemia, encountered Brown at Lowositz, and defeated him. This battle decided the fate of Saxony. Augustus and his favourite Brühl fled to Poland. The whole army of the electorate capitulated. From that time till the end of the war Frederic treated Saxony as a part of his dominions, or, rather, he acted towards the Saxons in a manner which may serve to illustrate the whole meaning of that tremendous sentence, "subjectos tanquam suos, viles tanquam alienos." Saxony was as much in his power as Brandenburg; and he had no such interest in the welfare of Saxony as he had in the welfare of Brandenburg. He accordingly levied troops and exacted contributions throughout the enslaved province with far more rigour than in any part of his own dominions. Seventeen thousand men who had been in the camp at Pirna were half compelled, half persuaded to enlist under their conqueror. Thus, within a few weeks from the commencement of hostilities, one of the confederates had been disarmed, and his weapons were now pointed against the rest.

The winter put a stop to military operations. All had hitherto gone well. But the real tug of war was still to come. It was easy to foresee that the year 1757 would be a memorable era in the history of Europe.

The King's scheme for the campaign was simple, bold, and judicious. The Duke of Cumberland with an English and Hanoverian army was in Western Germany, and might be able to prevent the French troops from attacking Prussia. The Russians, confined by their snows, would probably not stir till the spring was far advanced. Saxony was prostrated. Sweden could do nothing very important. During a few months Frederic would have to deal with Austria alone. Even thus the odds were against him. But ability and courage have often triumphed against odds still more formidable.

Early in 1757 the Prussian army in Saxony began to move. Through four defiles in the mountains they came pouring into Bohemia. Prague was the King's first mark; but the ulterior object was probably Vienna. At Prague lay Marshal Brown with one great army. Daun, the most cautious and fortunate of the Austrian captains, was advancing with another. Frederic determined to overwhelm Brown before Daun should arrive. On the sixth of May was fought, under those walls which, a hundred and thirty years before, had witnessed the victory of the Catholic league and the flight of the unhappy Palatine, a battle more bloody than any which Europe saw during the long interval between Malplaquet and Eylau. The King and Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick were distinguished on that day by their valour and exertions. But the chief glory was with Schwerin. When the Prussian infantry wavered, the stout old marshal snatched the colours from an ensign, and, waving them in the air, led back his regiment to the charge. Thus at seventy-two years of age he fell in the thickest battle, still grasping the standard which bears the black eagle on the field argent. The victory remained with the King; but it had been dearly purchased. Whole columns of his bravest warriors had fallen. He admitted that he had lost eighteen thousand

men. Of the enemy, twenty-four thousand had been killed, wounded, or taken.

Part of the defeated army was shut up in Prague. Part fled to join the troops which, under the command of Daun, were now close at hand. Frederic determined to play over the same game which had succeeded at Lowositz. He left a large force to besiege Prague, and at the head of thirty thousand men he marched against Daun. The cautious Marshal, though he had a great superiority in numbers, would risk nothing. He occupied at Kollin a position almost impregnable, and awaited the attack of the King.

It was the eighteenth of June, a day which, if the Greek superstition still retained its influence, would be held sacred to Nemesis, a day on which the two greatest princes of modern times were taught, by a terrible experience, that neither skill nor valour can fix the inconstancy of fortune. The battle began before noon; and part of the Prussian army maintained the contest till after the midsummer sun had gone down. But at length the King found that his troops, having been repeatedly driven back with frightful carnage, could no longer be led to the charge. He was with difficulty persuaded to quit the field. The officers of his personal staff were under the necessity of expostulating with him, and one of them took the liberty to say, "Does your Majesty mean to storm the batteries alone?" Thirteen thousand of his bravest followers had perished. Nothing remained for him but to retreat in good order, to raise the siege of Prague, and to hurry his army by different routes out of Bohemia.

This stroke seemed to be final. Frederic's situation had at best been such, that only an uninterrupted run of good-luck could save him, as it seemed, from ruin. And now, almost

in the outset of the contest, he had met with a check which, even in a war between equal powers, would have been felt as serious. He had owed much to the opinion which all Europe entertained of his army. Since his accession, his soldiers had in many successive battles been victorious over the Austrians. But the glory had departed from his arms. All whom his malevolent sarcasms had wounded, made haste to avenge themselves by scoffing at the scoffer. His soldiers had ceased to confide in his star. In every part of his camp his dispositions were severely criticised. Even in his own family he had detractors. His next brother William, heir-presumptive, or rather in truth heir-apparent, to the throne, and great-grandfather of the present king, could not refrain from lamenting his own fate and that of the house of Hohenzollern, once so great and so prosperous, but now, by the rash ambition of its chief, made a by-word to all nations. These complaints, and some blunders which William committed during the retreat from Bohemia, called forth the bitter displeasure of the inexorable King. The prince's heart was broken by the cutting reproaches of his brother; he quitted the army, retired to a country seat, and in a short time died of shame and vexation.

It seemed that the King's distress could hardly be increased. Yet at this moment another blow not less terrible than that of Kollin fell upon him. The French under Marshal D'Estrées had invaded Germany. The Duke of Cumberland had given them battle at Hastembeck, and had been defeated. In order to save the Electorate of Hanover from entire subjugation, he had made, at Closter Seven, an arrangement with the French Generals, which left them at liberty to turn their arms against the Prussian dominions.

That nothing might be wanting to Frederic's distress, he lost his mother just at this time; and he appears to have felt

the loss more than was to be expected from the hardness and severity of his character. In truth, his misfortunes had now cut to the quick. The mocker, the tyrant, the most rigorous, the most imperious, the most cynical of men, was very unhappy. His face was so haggard and his form so thin, that when on his return from Bohemia he passed through Leipsic, the people hardly knew him again. His sleep was broken; the tears, in spite of himself, often started into his eyes; and the grave began to present itself to his agitated mind as the best refuge from misery and dishonour. His resolution was fixed never to be taken alive, and never to make peace on condition of descending from his place among the powers of Europe. He saw nothing left for him except to die; and he deliberately chose his mode of death. He always carried about with him a sure and speedy poison in a small glass case; and to the few in whom he placed confidence, he made no mystery of his resolution.

But we should very imperfectly describe the state of Frederic's mind, if we left out of view the laughable peculiarities which contrasted so singularly with the gravity, energy, and harshness of his character. It is difficult to say whether the tragic or the comic predominated in the strange scene which was then acting. In the midst of all the great King's calamities, his passion for writing indifferent poetry grew stronger and stronger. Enemies all round him, despair in his heart, pills of corrosive sublimate hidden in his clothes, he poured forth hundreds upon hundreds of lines, hateful to gods and men, the insipid dregs of Voltaire's Hippocrene, the faint echo of the lyre of Chaulieu. It is amusing to compare what he did during the last months of 1757, with what he wrote during the same time. It may be doubted whether any equal portion of the life of Hannibal, of Cæsar, or of Napoleon, will bear a comparison with that short period, the most brilliant in the

history of Prussia and of Frederic. Yet at this very time the scanty leisure of the illustrious warrior was employed in producing odes and epistles, a little better than Cibber's and a little worse than Hayley's. Here and there a manly sentiment which deserves to be in prose makes its appearance in company with Prometheus and Orpheus, Elysium and Acheron, the plaintive Philomel, the poppies of Morpheus, and all the other frippery which, like a robe tossed by a proud beauty to her waiting-woman, has long been contemptuously abandoned by genius to mediocrity. We hardly know any instance of the strength and weakness of human nature so striking, and so grotesque, as the character of this haughty, vigilant, resolute, sagacious blue-stocking, half Mithridates and half Trissotin, bearing up against a world in arms, with an ounce of poison in one pocket and a quire of bad verses in the other.

Frederic had some time before made advances towards a reconciliation with Voltaire; and some civil letters had passed between them. After the battle of Kollin their epistolary intercourse became, at least in seeming, friendly and confidential. We do not know any collection of Letters which throws so much light on the darkest and most intricate parts of human nature, as the correspondence of these strange beings after they had exchanged forgiveness. Both felt that the quarrel had lowered them in the public estimation. They admired each other. They stood in need of each other. The great King wished to be handed down to posterity by the great Writer. The great Writer felt himself exalted by the homage of the great King. Yet the wounds which they had inflicted on each other were too deep to be effaced, or even perfectly healed. Not only did the scars remain; the sore places often festered and bled afresh. The letters consisted for the most part of compliments, thanks,

offers of service, assurances of attachment. But if any thing brought back to Frederic's recollection the cunning and mischievous pranks by which Voltaire had provoked him, some expression of contempt and displeasure broke forth in the midst of eulogy. It was much worse when any thing recalled to the mind of Voltaire the outrages which he and his kinswoman had suffered at Frankfort. All at once his flowing panegyric was turned into invective. "Remember how you behaved to me. For your sake I have lost the favour of my native king. For your sake I am an exile from my country. I loved you. I trusted myself to you. I had no wish but to end my life in your service. And what was my reward? Stripped of all that you had bestowed on me, the key, the order, the pension, I was forced to fly from your territories. I was hunted as if I had been a deserter from your grenadiers. I was arrested, insulted, plundered. My niece was dragged through the mud of Frankfort by your soldiers, as if she had been some wretched follower of your camp. You have great talents. You have good qualities. But you have one odious vice. You delight in the abasement of your fellow-creatures. You have brought disgrace on the name of philosopher. You have given some colour to the slanders of the bigots, who say that no confidence can be placed in the justice or humanity of those who reject the Christian faith." Then the King answers, with less heat but equal severity — "You know that you behaved shamefully in Prussia. It was well for you that you had to deal with a man so indulgent to the infirmities of genius as I am. You richly deserved to see the inside of a dungeon. Your talents are not more widely known than your faithlessness and your malevolence. The grave itself is no asylum from your spite. Maupertuis is dead; but you still go on calumniating and deriding him, as if you had not made him miser-

able enough while he was living. Let us have no more of this. And, above all, let me hear no more of your niece. I am sick to death of her name. I can bear with your faults for the sake of your merits; but she has not written Mahomet or Merope."

An explosion of this kind, it might be supposed, would necessarily put an end to all amicable communication. But it was not so. After every outbreak of ill humour this extraordinary pair became more loving than before, and exchanged compliments and assurances of mutual regard with a wonderful air of sincerity.

It may well be supposed that men who wrote thus to each other, were not very guarded in what they said of each other. The English ambassador, Mitchell, who knew that the King of Prussia was constantly writing to Voltaire with the greatest freedom on the most important subjects, was amazed to hear his majesty designate this highly favoured correspondent as a bad-hearted fellow, the greatest rascal on the face of the earth. And the language which the poet held about the King was not much more respectful.

It would probably have puzzled Voltaire himself to say what was his real feeling towards Frederic. It was compounded of all sentiments, from enmity to friendship, and from scorn to admiration; and the proportions in which these elements were mixed, changed every moment. The old patriarch resembled the spoiled child who screams, stamps, cuffs, laughs, kisses, and cuddles within one quarter of an hour. His resentment was not extinguished; yet he was not without sympathy for his old friend. As a Frenchman, he wished success to the arms of his country. As a philosopher, he was anxious for the stability of a throne on which a philosopher sat. He longed both to save and to humble Frederic. There was one way, and only one, in which all his con-

flicting feelings could at once be gratified. If Frederic were preserved by the interference of France, if it were known that for that interference he was indebted to the mediation of Voltaire, this would indeed be delicious revenge; this would indeed be to heap coals of fire on that haughty head. Nor did the vain and restless poet think it impossible that he might, from his hermitage near the Alps, dictate peace to Europe. D'Estrées had quitted Hanover, and the command of the French army had been intrusted to the Duke of Richelieu, a man whose chief distinction was derived from his success in gallantry. Richelieu was in truth the most eminent of that race of seducers by profession, who furnished Crébillon the younger and La Clos with models for their heroes. In his earlier days the royal house itself had not been secure from his presumptuous love. He was believed to have carried his conquests into the family of Orleans; and some suspected that he was not unconcerned in the mysterious remorse which embittered the last hours of the charming mother of Lewis the Fifteenth. But the Duke was now sixty years old. With a heart deeply corrupted by vice, a head long accustomed to think only on trifles, an impaired constitution, an impaired fortune, and, worst of all, a very red nose, he was entering on a dull, frivolous and unrespected old age. Without one qualification for military command, except that personal courage which was common between him and the whole nobility of France, he had been placed at the head of the army of Hanover; and in that situation he did his best to repair, by extortion and corruption, the injury which he had done to his property, by a life of dissolute profusion.

The Duke of Richelieu to the end of his life hated the philosophers as a sect, not for those parts of their system which a good and wise man would have condemned, but

for their virtues, for their spirit of free inquiry, and for their hatred of those social abuses of which he was himself the personification. But he, like many of those who thought with him, excepted Voltaire from the list of proscribed writers. He frequently sent flattering letters to Ferney. He did the patriarch the honour to borrow money of him, and even carried this condescending friendship so far as to forget to pay the interest. Voltaire thought that it might be in his power to bring the Duke and the King of Prussia into communication with each other. He wrote earnestly to both; and he so far succeeded that a correspondence between them was commenced.

But it was to very different means that Frederic was to owe his deliverance. At the beginning of November, the net seemed to have closed completely round him. The Russians were in the field, and were spreading devastation through his eastern provinces. Silesia was overrun by the Austrians. A great French army was advancing from the west under the command of Marshal Soubise, a prince of the great Armorican house of Rohan. Berlin itself had been taken and plundered by the Croatians. Such was the situation from which Frederic extricated himself, with dazzling glory, in the short space of thirty days.

He marched first against Soubise. On the fifth of November the armies met at Rossbach. The French were two to one; but they were ill disciplined, and their general was a dunce. The tactics of Frederic, and the well-regulated valour of the Prussian troops, obtained a complete victory. Seven thousand of the invaders were made prisoners. Their guns, their colours, their baggage, fell into the hands of the conquerors. Those who escaped fled as confusedly as a mob scattered by cavalry. Victorious in the West, the King turned his arms towards Silesia. In that quarter every

thing seemed to be lost. Breslau had fallen; and Charles of Lorraine, with a mighty power, held the whole province. On the fifth of December, exactly one month after the battle of Rossbach, Frederic, with forty thousand men, and Prince Charles, at the head of not less than sixty thousand, met at Leuthen, hard by Breslau. The King, who was, in general, perhaps too much inclined to consider the common soldier as a mere machine, resorted, on this great day, to means resembling those which Bonaparte afterwards employed with such signal success for the purpose of stimulating military enthusiasm. The principal officers were convoked. Frederic addressed them with great force and pathos; and directed them to speak to their men as he had spoken to them. When the armies were set in battle array, the Prussian troops were in a state of fierce excitement; but their excitement showed itself after the fashion of a grave people. The columns advanced to the attack chanting, to the sound of drums and fifes, the rude hymns of the old Saxon Sternholds. They had never fought so well; nor had the genius of their chief ever been so conspicuous. "That battle," said Napoleon, "was a masterpiece. Of itself it is sufficient to entitle Frederic to a place in the first rank among generals." The victory was complete. Twenty-seven thousand Austrians were killed, wounded, or taken; fifty stand of colours, a hundred guns, four thousand waggons, fell into the hands of the Prussians. Breslau opened its gates; Silesia was reconquered; Charles of Lorraine retired to hide his shame and sorrow at Brussels; and Frederic allowed his troops to take some repose in winter quarters, after a campaign, to the vicissitudes of which it will be difficult to find any parallel in ancient or modern history.

The King's fame filled all the world. He had, during the last year, maintained a contest, on terms of advantage,

against three powers, the weakest of which had more than three times his resources. He had fought four great pitched battles against superior forces. Three of these battles he had gained; and the defeat of Kollin, repaired as it had been, rather raised than lowered his military renown. The victory of Leuthen is, to this day, the proudest on the roll of Prussian fame. Leipsic indeed, and Waterloo, produced consequences more important to mankind. But the glory of Leipsic must be shared by the Prussians with the Austrians and Russians; and at Waterloo the British infantry bore the burden and heat of the day. The victory of Rossbach was, in a military point of view, less honourable than that of Leuthen; for it was gained over an incapable general and a disorganized army; but the moral effect which it produced was immense. All the preceding triumphs of Frederic had been triumphs over Germans, and could excite no emotions of national pride among the German people. It was impossible that a Hessian or a Hanoverian could feel any patriotic exultation at hearing that Pomeranians had slaughtered Moravians, or that Saxon banners had been hung in the churches of Berlin. Indeed, though the military character of the Germans justly stood high throughout the world, they could boast of no great day which belonged to them as a people; of no Agincourt, of no Bannockburn. Most of their victories had been gained over each other; and their most splendid exploits against foreigners had been achieved under the command of Eugene, who was himself a foreigner. The news of the battle of Rossbach stirred the blood of the whole of the mighty population from the Alps to the Baltic, and from the borders of Courland to those of Lorraine. Westphalia and Lower Saxony had been deluged by a great host of strangers, whose speech was unintelligible, and whose petulant and licentious manners had excited the strongest

feelings of disgust and hatred. That great host had been put to flight by a small band of German warriors, led by a prince of German blood on the side of father and mother, and marked by the fair hair and the clear blue eye of Germany. Never since the dissolution of the empire of Charlemagne, had the Teutonic race won such a field against the French. The tidings called forth a general burst of delight and pride from the whole of the great family which spoke the various dialects of the ancient language of Arminius. The fame of Frederic began to supply, in some degree, the place of a common government and of a common capital. It became a rallying point for all true Germans, a subject of mutual congratulation to the Bavarian and the Westphalian, to the citizen of Frankfort and the citizen of Nuremburg. Then first it was manifest that the Germans were truly a nation. Then first was discernible that patriotic spirit which, in 1813, achieved the great deliverance of central Europe, and which still guards, and long will guard, against foreign ambition the old freedom of the Rhine.

Nor were the effects produced by that celebrated day merely political. The greatest masters of German poetry and eloquence have admitted that, though the great King neither valued nor understood his native language, though he looked on France as the only seat of taste and philosophy, yet, in his own despite, he did much to emancipate the genius of his countrymen from the foreign yoke; and that, in the act of vanquishing Soubise, he was, unintentionally, rousing the spirit which soon began to question the literary precedence of Boileau and Voltaire. So strangely do events confound all the plans of man. A prince who read only French, who wrote only French, who aspired to rank as a French classic, became, quite unconsciously, the means of liberating half the Continent from the dominion of that French criticism of

which he was himself, to the end of his life, a slave. Yet even the enthusiasm of Germany in favour of Frederic hardly equalled the enthusiasm of England. The birth-day of our ally was celebrated with as much enthusiasm as that of our own sovereign; and at night the streets of London were in a blaze with illuminations. Portraits of the Hero of Rossbach, with his cocked hat and long pigtail, were in every house. An attentive observer will, at this day, find in the parlours of old-fashioned inns, and in the portfolios of print-sellers, twenty portraits of Frederic for one of George II. The sign-painters were every where employed in touching up Admiral Vernon into the King of Prussia. This enthusiasm was strong among religious people, and especially among the Methodists, who knew that the French and Austrians were Papists, and supposed Frederic to be the Joshua or Gideon of the Reformed Faith. One of Whitfield's hearers, on the day on which thanks for the battle of Leuthen were returned at the Tabernacle, made the following exquisitely ludicrous entry in a diary, part of which has come down to us: "The Lord stirred up the King of Prussia and his soldiers to pray. They kept three fast days, and spent about an hour praying and singing psalms before they engaged the enemy. O! how good it is to pray and fight!" Some young Englishmen of rank proposed to visit Germany as volunteers, for the purpose of learning the art of war under the greatest of commanders. This last proof of British attachment and admiration, Frederic politely but firmly declined. His camp was no place for amateur students of military science. The Prussian discipline was rigorous even to cruelty. The officers, while in the field, were expected to practise an abstemiousness and self-denial such as was hardly surpassed by the most rigid monastic orders. However noble their birth, however high their rank in the service,

they were not permitted to eat from any thing better than pewter. It was a high crime even in a count and field-marshal to have a single silver spoon among his baggage. Gay young Englishmen of twenty thousand a year, accustomed to liberty and to luxury, would not easily submit to these Spartan restraints. The King could not venture to keep them in order as he kept his own subjects in order. Situated as he was with respect to England, he could not well imprison or shoot refractory Howards and Cavendishes. On the other hand, the example of a few fine gentlemen, attended by chariots and livery servants, eating in plate, and drinking Champagne and Tokay, was enough to corrupt his whole army. He thought it best to make a stand at first, and civilly refused to admit such dangerous companions among his troops.

The help of England was bestowed in a manner far more useful and more acceptable. An annual subsidy of near seven hundred thousand pounds enabled the King to add probably more than fifty thousand men to his army. Pitt, now at the height of power and popularity, undertook the task of defending Western Germany against France, and asked Frederic only for the loan of a general. The general selected was Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, who had attained high distinction in the Prussian service. He was put at the head of an army, partly English, partly Hanoverian, partly composed of mercenaries hired from the petty princes of the empire. He soon vindicated the choice of the two allied courts, and proved himself the second general of the age.

Frederic passed the winter at Breslau, in reading, writing, and preparing for the next campaign. The havoc which the war had made among his troops was rapidly repaired; and in the spring of 1758 he was again ready for the conflict.

Prince Ferdinand kept the French in check. The King in the mean time, after attempting against the Austrians some operations which led to no very important result, marched to encounter the Russians, who, slaying, burning, and wasting wherever they turned, had penetrated into the heart of his realm. He gave them battle at Zorndorf, near Frankfort on the Oder. The fight was long and bloody. Quarter was neither given nor taken; for the Germans and Scythians regarded each other with bitter aversion, and the sight of the ravages committed by the half savage invaders had incensed the King and his army. The Russians were overthrown with great slaughter; and for a few months no further danger was to be apprehended from the east.

A day of thanksgiving was proclaimed by the King, and was celebrated with pride and delight by his people. The rejoicings in England were not less enthusiastic or less sincere. This may be selected as the point of time at which the military glory of Frederic reached the zenith. In the short space of three quarters of a year he had won three great battles over the armies of three mighty and warlike monarchies, France, Austria, and Russia.

But it was decreed that the temper of that strong mind should be tried by both extremes of fortune in rapid succession. Close upon this series of triumphs came a series of disasters, such as would have blighted the fame and broken the heart of almost any other commander. Yet Frederic, in the midst of his calamities, was still an object of admiration to his subjects, his allies, and his enemies. Overwhelmed by adversity, sick of life, he still maintained the contest, greater in defeat, in flight, and in what seemed hopeless ruin, than on the fields of his proudest victories.

Having vanquished the Russians, he hastened into Saxony to oppose the troops of the Empress Queen, commanded by

Daun, the most cautious, and Laudon, the most inventive and enterprising of her generals. These two celebrated commanders agreed on a scheme, in which the prudence of the one and the vigour of the other seem to have been happily combined. At dead of night they surprised the King in his camp at Hochkirch. His presence of mind saved his troops from destruction; but nothing could save them from defeat and severe loss. Marshal Keith was among the slain. The first roar of the guns roused the noble exile from his rest, and he was instantly in the front of the battle. He received a dangerous wound, but refused to quit the field, and was in the act of rallying his broken troops, when an Austrian bullet terminated his chequered and eventful life.

The misfortune was serious. But of all generals Frederic understood best how to repair defeat, and Daun understood least how to improve victory. In a few days the Prussian army was as formidable as before the battle. The prospect was, however, gloomy. An Austrian army under General Harsch had invaded Silesia, and invested the fortress of Neisse. Daun, after his success at Hochkirch, had written to Harsch in very confident terms; — "Go on with your operations against Neisse. Be quite at ease as to the King. I will give a good account of him." In truth, the position of the Prussians was full of difficulties. Between them and Silesia lay the victorious army of Daun. It was not easy for them to reach Silesia at all. If they did reach it, they left Saxony exposed to the Austrians. But the vigour and activity of Frederic surmounted every obstacle. He made a circuitous march of extraordinary rapidity, passed Daun, hastened into Silesia, raised the siege of Neisse, and drove Harsch into Bohemia. Daun availed himself of the King's absence to attack Dresden. The Prussians defended it desperately. The inhabitants of that wealthy and polished

capital begged in vain for mercy from the garrison within, and from the besiegers without. The beautiful suburbs were burned to the ground. It was clear that the town, if won at all, would be won street by street by the bayonet. At this conjuncture came news, that Frederic, having cleared Silesia of his enemies, was returning by forced marches into Saxony. Daun retired from before Dresden, and fell back into the Austrian territories. The King, over heaps of ruins, made his triumphant entry into the unhappy metropolis, which had so cruelly expiated the weak and perfidious policy of its sovereign. It was now the 20th of November. The cold weather suspended military operations; and the King again took up his winter quarters at Breslau.

The third of the seven terrible years was over; and Frederic still stood his ground. He had been recently tried by domestic as well as by military disasters. On the 14th of October, the day on which he was defeated at Hochkirch, the day on the anniversary of which, forty-eight years later, a defeat far more tremendous laid the Prussian monarchy in the dust, died Wilhelmina, Margravine of Bareuth. From the accounts which we have of her, by her own hand, and by the hands of the most discerning of her contemporaries, we should pronounce her to have been coarse, indelicate, and a good hater, but not destitute of kind and generous feelings. Her mind, naturally strong and observant, had been highly cultivated; and she was, and deserved to be, Frederic's favourite sister. He felt the loss as much as it was in his iron nature to feel the loss of any thing but a province or a battle.

At Breslau, during the winter, he was indefatigable in his poetical labours. The most spirited lines, perhaps, that he ever wrote, are to be found in a bitter lampoon on Lewis and Madame de Pompadour, which he composed at this time,

and sent to Voltaire. The verses were, indeed, so good that Voltaire was afraid that he might himself be suspected of having written them, or at least of having corrected them; and partly from fright, partly, we fear, from love of mischief, sent them to the Duke of Choiseul, then prime minister of France. Choiseul very wisely determined to encounter Frederic at Frederic's own weapons, and applied for assistance to Palissot, who had some skill as a versifier, and some little talent for satire. Palissot produced some very stinging lines on the moral and literary character of Frederic, and these lines the Duke sent to Voltaire. This war of couplets, following close on the carnage of Zorndorf and the conflagration of Dresden, illustrates well the strangely compounded character of the King of Prussia.

At this moment he was assailed by a new enemy. Benedict XIV., the best and wisest of the two hundred and fifty successors of St. Peter, was no more. During the short interval between his reign and that of his disciple Ganganelli, the chief seat in the Church of Rome was filled by Rezzonico, who took the name of Clement XIII. This absurd priest determined to try what the weight of his authority could effect in favour of the orthodox Maria Theresa against a heretic king. At the high mass on Christmas-day, a sword with a rich belt and scabbard, a hat of crimson velvet lined with ermine, and a dove of pearls, the mystic symbol of the Divine Comforter, were solemnly blessed by the supreme pontiff, and were sent with great ceremony to Marshal Daun, the conqueror of Kollin and Hochkirch. This mark of favour had more than once been bestowed by the Popes on the great champions of the faith. Similar honours had been paid, more than six centuries earlier, by Urban II. to Godfrey of Bouillon. Similar honours had been conferred on Alba for destroying the liberties of the Low Countries, and on John

Sobiesky after the deliverance of Vienna. But the presents which were received with profound reverence by the Baron of the Holy Sepulchre in the eleventh century, and which had not wholly lost their value even in the seventeenth century, appeared inexpressibly ridiculous to a generation which read Montesquieu and Voltaire. Frederic wrote sarcastic verses on the gifts, the giver, and the receiver. But the public wanted no prompter; and an universal roar of laughter from Petersburg to Lisbon reminded the Vatican that the age of crusades was over.

The fourth campaign, the most disastrous of all the campaigns of this fearful war, had now opened. The Austrians filled Saxony and menaced Berlin. The Russians defeated the King's generals on the Oder, threatened Silesia, effected a junction with Laudon, and intrenched themselves strongly at Kunersdorf. Frederic hastened to attack them. A great battle was fought. During the earlier part of the day every thing yielded to the impetuosity of the Prussians, and to the skill of their chief. The lines were forced. Half the Russian guns were taken. The King sent off a courier to Berlin with two lines, announcing a complete victory. But, in the mean time, the stubborn Russians, defeated yet unbroken, had taken up their stand in an almost impregnable position, on an eminence where the Jews of Frankfort were wont to bury their dead. Here the battle recommenced. The Prussian infantry, exhausted by six hours of hard fighting under a sun which equalled the tropical heat, were yet brought up repeatedly to the attack, but in vain. The King led three charges in person. Two horses were killed under him. The officers of his staff fell round him. His coat was pierced by several bullets. All was in vain. His infantry was driven back with frightful slaughter. Terror began to spread fast from man to man. At that moment, the fiery cavalry of

Laudon, still fresh, rushed on the wavering ranks. Then followed an universal rout. Frederic himself was on the point of falling into the hands of the conquerors, and was with difficulty saved by a gallant officer, who, at the head of a handful of Hussars, made good a diversion of a few minutes. Shattered in body, shattered in mind, the King reached that night a village which the Cossacks had plundered; and there, in a ruined and deserted farm-house, flung himself on a heap of straw. He had sent to Berlin a second despatch very different from his first: — "Let the royal family leave Berlin. Send the archives to Potsdam. The town may make terms with the enemy."

The defeat was, in truth, overwhelming. Of fifty thousand men who had that morning marched under the black eagles, not three thousand remained together. The King bethought him again of his corrosive sublimate, and wrote to bid adieu to his friends, and to give directions as to the measures to be taken in the event of his death: — "I have no resource left" — such is the language of one of his letters — "all is lost. I will not survive the ruin of my country. Farewell for ever."

But the mutual jealousies of the confederates prevented them from following up their victory. They lost a few days in loitering and squabbling; and a few days, improved by Frederic, were worth more than the years of other men. On the morning after the battle, he had got together eighteen thousand of his troops. Very soon his force amounted to thirty thousand. Guns were procured from the neighbouring fortresses; and there was again an army. Berlin was for the present safe; but calamities came pouring on the King in uninterrupted succession. One of his generals, with a large body of troops, was taken at Maxen; another was defeated at Meissen; and when at length the campaign of 1759 closed, in the midst of a rigorous winter, the situation of Prussia

appeared desperate. The only consoling circumstance was, that, in the West, Ferdinand of Brunswick had been more fortunate than his master; and by a series of exploits, of which the battle of Minden was the most glorious, had removed all apprehension of danger on the side of France.

The fifth year was now about to commence. It seemed impossible that the Prussian territories, repeatedly devastated by hundreds of thousands of invaders, could longer support the contest. But the King carried on war as no European power has ever carried on war, except the Committee of Public Safety during the great agony of the French Revolution. He governed his kingdom as he would have governed a besieged town, not caring to what extent property was destroyed, or the pursuits of civil life suspended, so that he did but make head against the enemy. As long as there was a man left in Prussia, that man might carry a musket; as long as there was a horse left, that horse might draw artillery. The coin was debased, the civil functionaries were left unpaid; in some provinces civil government altogether ceased to exist. But there were still rye-bread and potatoes; there were still lead and gunpowder; and, while the means of sustaining and destroying life remained, Frederic was determined to fight it out to the very last.

The earlier part of the campaign of 1760 was unfavourable to him. Berlin was again occupied by the enemy. Great contributions were levied on the inhabitants, and the royal palace was plundered. But at length, after two years of calamity, victory came back to his arms. At Liegnitz he gained a great battle over Laudon; at Torgau, after a day of horrible carnage, he triumphed over Daun. The fifth year closed, and still the event was in suspense. In the countries where the war had raged, the misery and exhaustion were more appalling than ever; but still there were left

men and beasts, arms and food, and still Frederic fought on. In truth he had now been bated into savageness. His heart was ulcerated with hatred. The implacable resentment with which his enemies persecuted him, though originally provoked by his own unprincipled ambition, excited in him a thirst for vengeance which he did not even attempt to conceal. "It is hard," he says in one of his letters, "for man to bear what I bear. I begin to feel that, as the Italians say, revenge is a pleasure for the gods. My philosophy is worn out by suffering. I am no saint, like those of whom we read in the legends; and I will own that I should die content if only I could first inflict a portion of the misery which I endure."

Borne up by such feelings, he struggled with various success, but constant glory, through the campaign of 1761. On the whole, the result of this campaign was disastrous to Prussia. No great battle was gained by the enemy; but, in spite of the desperate bounds of the hunted tiger, the circle of pursuers was fast closing round him. Laudon had surprised the important fortress of Schweidnitz. With that fortress, half of Silesia, and the command of the most important defiles through the mountains, had been transferred to the Austrians. The Russians had overpowered the King's generals in Pomerania. The country was so completely desolated that he began, by his own confession, to look round him with blank despair, unable to imagine where recruits, horses, or provisions were to be found.

Just at this time two great events brought on a complete change in the relations of almost all the powers of Europe. One of those events was the retirement of Mr. Pitt from office: the other was the death of the Empress Elizabeth of Russia.

The retirement of Pitt seemed to be an omen of utter ruin to the House of Brandenburg. His proud and vehement nature was incapable of any thing that looked like either fear

or treachery. He had often declared that, while he was in power, England should never make a peace of Utrecht, should never, for any selfish object, abandon an ally even in the last extremity of distress. The Continental war was his own war. He had been bold enough, he who in former times had attacked, with irresistible powers of oratory, the Hanoverian policy of Carteret, and the German subsidies of Newcastle, to declare that Hanover ought to be as dear to us as Hampshire, and that he would conquer America in Germany. He had fallen; and the power which he had exercised, not always with discretion, but always with vigour and genius, had devolved on a favourite who was the representative of the Tory party, of the party which had thwarted William, which had persecuted Marlborough, and which had given up the Catalans to the vengeance of Philip of Anjou. To make peace with France, to shake off, with all, or more than all, the speed compatible with decency, every Continental connexion, these were among the chief objects of the new Minister. The policy then followed inspired Frederic with an unjust, but deep and bitter aversion to the English name, and produced effects which are still felt throughout the civilized world. To that policy it was owing that, some years later, England could not find on the whole Continent a single ally to stand by her, in her extreme need, against the House of Bourbon. To that policy it was owing that Frederic, alienated from England, was compelled to connect himself closely, during his later years, with Russia, and was induced to assist in that great crime, the fruitful parent of other great crimes, the first partition of Poland.

Scarcely had the retreat of Mr. Pitt deprived Prussia of her only friend, when the death of Elizabeth produced an entire revolution in the politics of the North. The Grand Duke Peter, her nephew, who now ascended the Russian

throne, was not merely free from the prejudices which his aunt had entertained against Frederic, but was a worshipper, a servile imitator of the great King. The days of the new Czar's government were few and evil, but sufficient to produce a change in the whole state of Christendom. He set the Prussian prisoners at liberty, fitted them out decently, and sent them back to their master; he withdrew his troops from the provinces which Elizabeth had decided on incorporating with her dominions; and he absolved all those Prussian subjects, who had been compelled to swear fealty to Russia, from their engagements.

Not content with concluding peace on terms favourable to Prussia, he solicited rank in the Prussian service, dressed himself in a Prussian uniform, wore the Black Eagle of Prussia on his breast, made preparations for visiting Prussia, in order to have an interview with the object of his idolatry, and actually sent fifteen thousand excellent troops to reinforce the shattered army of Frederic. Thus strengthened, the King speedily repaired the losses of the preceding year, reconquered Silesia, defeated Daun at Burkersdorf, invested and retook Schweidnitz, and, at the close of the year, presented to the forces of Maria Theresa a front as formidable as before the great reverses of 1759. Before the end of the campaign, his friend the Emperor Peter, having, by a series of absurd insults to the institutions, manners, and feelings of his people, united them in hostility to his person and government, was deposed and murdered. The Empress, who, under the title of Catherine the Second, now assumed the supreme power, was, at the commencement of her administration, by no means partial to Frederic, and refused to permit her troops to remain under his command. But she observed the peace made by her husband; and Prussia was no longer threatened by danger from the East.

England and France at the same time paired off together. They concluded a treaty, by which they bound themselves to observe neutrality with respect to the German war. Thus the coalitions on both sides were dissolved; and the original enemies, Austria and Prussia, remained alone confronting each other.

Austria had undoubtedly far greater means than Prussia, and was less exhausted by hostilities; yet it seemed hardly possible that Austria could effect alone what she had in vain attempted to effect when supported by France on the one side, and by Russia on the other. Danger also began to menace the Imperial house from another quarter. The Ottoman Porte held threatening language, and a hundred thousand Turks were mustered on the frontiers of Hungary. The proud and revengeful spirit of the Empress Queen at length gave way; and, in February 1763, the peace of Hubertusburg put an end to the conflict which had, during seven years, devastated Germany. The King ceded nothing. The whole Continent in arms had proved unable to tear Silesia from that iron grasp.

The war was over. Frederic was safe. His glory was beyond the reach of envy. If he had not made conquests as vast as those of Alexander, of Cæsar, and of Napoleon, if he had not, on fields of battle, enjoyed the constant success of Marlborough and Wellington, he had yet given an example unrivalled in history of what capacity and resolution can effect against the greatest superiority of power and the utmost spite of fortune. He entered Berlin in triumph, after an absence of more than six years. The streets were brilliantly lighted up, and, as he passed along in an open carriage, with Ferdinand of Brunswick at his side, the multitude saluted him with loud praises and blessings. He was moved by those marks of attachment, and repeatedly exclaimed, "Long live my dear

people! Long live my children!" Yet, even in the midst of that gay spectacle, he could not but perceive every where the traces of destruction and decay. The city had been more than once plundered. The population had considerably diminished. Berlin, however, had suffered little when compared with most parts of the kingdom. The ruin of private fortunes, the distress of all ranks, was such as might appal the firmest mind. Almost every province had been the seat of war, and of war conducted with merciless ferocity. Clouds of Croatians had descended on Silesia. Tens of thousands of Cossacks had been let loose on Pomerania and Brandenburg. The mere contributions levied by the invaders amounted, it was said, to more than a hundred millions of dollars; and the value of what they extorted was probably much less than the value of what they destroyed. The fields lay uncultivated. The very seed-corn had been devoured in the madness of hunger. Famine, and contagious maladies produced by famine, had swept away the herds and flocks; and there was reason to fear that a great pestilence among the human race was likely to follow in the train of that tremendous war. Near fifteen thousand houses had been burned to the ground. The population of the kingdom had in seven years decreased to the frightful extent of ten per cent. A sixth of the males capable of bearing arms had actually perished on the field of battle. In some districts, no labourers, except women, were seen in the fields at harvest-time. In others, the traveller passed shuddering through a succession of silent villages, in which not a single inhabitant remained. The currency had been debased; the authority of laws and magistrates had been suspended; the whole social system was deranged. For, during that convulsive struggle, every thing that was not military violence was anarchy. Even the army was disorganized. Some great generals, and a crowd of excellent

officers, had fallen, and it had been impossible to supply their place. The difficulty of finding recruits had, towards the close of the war, been so great, that selection and rejection were impossible. Whole battalions were composed of deserters or of prisoners. It was hardly to be hoped that thirty years of repose and industry, would repair the ruin produced by seven years of havoc. One consolatory circumstance, indeed, there was. No debt had been incurred. The burdens of the war had been terrible, almost insupportable; but no arrear was left to embarrass the finances in time of peace.

Here, for the present, we must pause. We have accompanied Frederic to the close of his career as a warrior. Possibly, when these Memoirs are completed, we may resume the consideration of his character, and give some account of his domestic and foreign policy, and of his private habits, during the many years of tranquillity which followed the Seven Years' War.

JOHN BUNYAN.

JOHN BUNYAN.

Bunyan, John, the most popular religious writer in the English language, was born at Elstow, about a mile from Bedford, in the year 1628. He may be said to have been born a tinker. The tinkers then formed a hereditary caste, which was held in no high estimation. They were generally vagrants and pilferers, and were often confounded with the gipsies, whom in truth they nearly resembled. Bunyan's father was more respectable than most of the tribe. He had a fixed residence, and was able to send his son to a village school where reading and writing were taught.

The years of John's boyhood were those during which the puritan spirit was in the highest vigour all over England; and nowhere had that spirit more influence than in Bedfordshire. It is not wonderful, therefore, that a lad to whom nature had given a powerful imagination and sensibility which amounted to a disease, should have been early haunted by religious terrors. Before he was ten, his sports were interrupted by fits of remorse and despair; and his sleep was disturbed by dreams of fiends trying to fly away with him. As he grew older, his mental conflicts became still more violent. The strong language in which he described them has strangely misled all his biographers except Mr. Southey. It has long been an ordinary practice with pious

writers to cite Bunyan as an instance of the supernatural power of divine grace to rescue the human soul from the lowest depths of wickedness. He is called in one book the most notorious of profligates; in another, the brand plucked from the burning. He is designated in Mr. Ivimey's History of the Baptists as the depraved Bunyan, the wicked tinker of Elstow. Mr. Ryland, a man once of great note among the Dissenters, breaks out into the following rhapsody: — "No man of common sense and common integrity can deny that Bunyan was a practical atheist, a worthless contemptible infidel, a vile rebel to God and goodness, a common profligate, a soul-despising, a soul-murdering, a soul-damning, thoughtless wretch as could exist on the face of the earth. Now be astonished, O heavens, to eternity! and wonder, O earth and hell! while time endures. Behold this very man become a miracle of mercy, a mirror of wisdom, goodness, holiness, truth, and love." But whoever takes the trouble to examine the evidence will find that the good men who wrote this had been deceived by a phraseology which, as they had been hearing it and using it all their lives, they ought to have understood better. There cannot be a greater mistake than to infer from the strong expressions in which a devout man bemoans his exceeding sinfulness, that he has led a worse life than his neighbours. Many excellent persons, whose moral character from boyhood to old age has been free from any stain discernible to their fellow creatures, have, in their autobiographies and diaries, applied to themselves, and doubtless with sincerity, epithets as severe as could be applied to Titus Oates or Mrs. Brownrigg. It is quite certain that Bunyan was, at eighteen, what, in any but the most austerely puritanical circles, would have been considered as a young man of singular gravity and innocence. Indeed, it may be remarked

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that he, like many other penitents who, in general terms, acknowledge themselves to have been the worst of mankind, fired up, and stood vigorously on his defence, whenever any particular charge was brought against him by others. He declares, it is true, that he had let loose the reins on the neck of his lusts, that he had delighted in all transgressions against the divine law, and that he had been the ringleader of the youth of Elstow in all manner of vice. But when those who wished him ill accused him of licentious amours, he called on God and the angels to attest his purity. No woman, he said, in heaven, earth, or hell, could charge him with having ever made any improper advances to her. Not only had he been strictly faithful to his wife; but he had, even before his marriage, been perfectly spotless. It does not appear from his own confessions, or from the railings of his enemies, that he ever was drunk in his life. One bad habit he contracted, that of using profane language; but he tells us that a single reproof cured him so effectually that he never offended again. The worst that can be laid to the charge of this poor youth, whom it has been the fashion to represent as the most desperate of reprobates, as a village Rochester, is that he had a great liking for some diversions, quite harmless in themselves, but condemned by the rigid precisians among whom he lived, and for whose opinion he had a great respect. The four chief sins of which he was guilty were dancing, ringing the bells of the parish church, playing at tipcat, and reading the History of Sir Bevis of Southampton. A Rector of the school of Laud would have held such a young man up to the whole parish as a model. But Bunyan's notions of good and evil had been learned in a very different school; and he was made miserable by the conflict between his tastes and his scruples.

When he was about seventeen, the ordinary course of his life was interrupted by an event which gave a lasting colour to his thoughts. He enlisted in the parliamentary army, and served during the decisive campaign of 1645. All that we know of his military career is that, at the siege of Leicester, one of his camrades, who had taken his post, was killed by a shot from the town. Bunyan ever after considered himself as having been saved from death by the special interference of Providence. It may be observed, that his imagination was strongly impressed by the glimpse which he had caught of the pomp of war. To the last he loved to draw his illustrations of sacred things from camps and fortresses, from guns, drums, trumpets, flags of truce, and regiments arrayed, each under its own banner. His Greatheart, his Captain Boanerges, and his Captain Credence, are evidently portraits, of which the originals were among those martial saints who fought and expounded in Fairfax's army.

In a few months Bunyan returned home, and married. His wife had some pious relations, and brought him as her only portion some pious books. And now his mind, excitable by nature, very imperfectly disciplined by education, and exposed, without any protection, to the infectious virulence of the enthusiasm which was then epidemic in England, began to be fearfully disordered. In outward things he soon became a strict Pharisee. He was constant in attendance at prayers and sermons. His favourite amusements were, one after another, relinquished, though not without many painful struggles. In the middle of a game at tipcat he paused, and stood staring wildly upwards with his stick in his hand. He had heard a voice asking him whether he would leave his sins and go to heaven, or keep his sins and go to hell; and he had seen an awful countenance frowning on him from the sky. The odious vice of bell-ringing he renounced; but he still for

a time ventured to go to the church tower and look on while others pulled the ropes. But soon the thought struck him that, if he persisted in such wickedness, the steeple would fall on his head; and he fled in terror from the accursed place. To give up dancing on the village green was still harder; and some months elapsed before he had the fortitude to part with this darling sin. When this last sacrifice had been made, he was, even when tried by the maxims of that austere time, faultless. All Elstow talked of him as an eminently pious youth. But his own mind was more unquiet than ever. Having nothing more to do in the way of visible reformation, yet finding in religion no pleasures to supply the place of the juvenile amusements which he had relinquished, he began to apprehend that he lay under some special malediction; and he was tormented by a succession of fantasies which seemed likely to drive him to suicide or to Bedlam.

At one time he took it into his head that all persons of Israelite blood would be saved, and tried to make out that he partook of that blood; but his hopes were speedily destroyed by his father, who seems to have had no ambition to be regarded as a Jew.

At another time Bunyan was disturbed by a strange dilemma: "If I have not faith, I am lost; if I have faith, I can work miracles." He was tempted to cry to the puddles between Elstow and Bedford, "Be ye dry," and to take his eternal hopes on the event.

Then he took up a notion that the day of grace for Bedford and the neighbouring villages was passed; that all who were to be saved in that part of England were already converted; and that he had begun to pray and strive some months too late.

Then he was harassed by doubts whether the Turks were not in the right, and the Christians in the wrong. Then he

was troubled by a maniacal impulse which prompted him to pray to the trees, to a broomstick, to the parish bull. As yet, however, he was only entering the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Soon the darkness grew thicker. Hideous forms floated before him. Sounds of cursing and wailing were in his ears. His way ran through stench and fire, close to the mouth of the bottomless pit. He began to be haunted by a strange curiosity about the unpardonable sin, and by a morbid longing to commit it. But the most frightful of all the forms which his disease took was a propensity to utter blasphemy, and especially to renounce his share in the benefits of the redemption. Night and day, in bed, at table, at work, evil spirits, as he imagined, were repeating close to his ear the words, "Sell him, sell him." He struck at the hobgoblins; he pushed them from him; but still they were ever at his side. He cried out in answer to them, hour after hour, "Never, never; not for thousands of worlds; not for thousands." At length, worn out by this long agony, he suffered the fatal words to escape him, "Let him go, if he will." Then his misery became more fearful than ever. He had done what could not be forgiven. He had forfeited his part of the great sacrifice. Like Esau, he had sold his birthright; and there was no longer any place for repentance. "None," he afterwards wrote, "knows the terrors of those days but myself." He has described his sufferings with singular energy, simplicity, and pathos. He envied the brutes; he envied the very stones in the street, and the tiles on the houses. The sun seemed to withhold its light and warmth from him. His body, though cast in a sturdy mould, and though still in the highest vigour of youth, trembled whole days together with the fear of death and judgment. He fancied that his trembling was the sign set on the worst reprobates, the sign which God had put on Cain. The unhappy man's emotion destroyed his

power of digestion. He had such pains that he expected to burst asunder like Judas, whom he regarded as his prototype.

Neither the books which Bunyan read, nor the advisers whom he consulted, were likely to do much good in a case like his. His small library had received a most unseasonable addition, the account of the lamentable end of Francis Spira. One ancient man of high repute for piety, whom the sufferer consulted, gave an opinion which might well have produced fatal consequences. "I am afraid," said Bunyan, "that I have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost." "Indeed," said the old fanatic, "I am afraid that you have."

At length the clouds broke; the light became clearer and clearer; and the enthusiast, who had imagined that he was branded with the mark of the first murderer, and destined to the end of the arch traitor, enjoyed peace and a cheerful confidence in the mercy of God. Years elapsed, however, before his nerves, which had been so perilously overstrained, recovered their tone. When he had joined a Baptist society at Bedford, and was for the first time admitted to partake of the Eucharist, it was with difficulty that he could refrain from imprecating destruction on his brethren while the cup was passing from hand to hand. After he had been some time a member of the congregation, he began to preach; and his sermons produced a powerful effect. He was indeed illiterate; but he spoke to illiterate men. The severe training through which he had passed had given him such an experimental knowledge of all the modes of religious melancholy as he could never have gathered from books; and his vigorous genius, animated by a fervent spirit of devotion, enabled him not only to exercise a great influence over the vulgar, but even to extort the half contemptuous admiration of scholars. Yet it was long before he ceased to be tormented by an im-

pulse which urged him to utter words of horrible impiety in the pulpit.

Counter-irritants are of as great use in moral as in physical diseases. It should seem that Bunyan was finally relieved from the internal sufferings which had embittered his life by sharp persecution from without. He had been five years a preacher, when the Restoration put it in the power of the Cavalier gentlemen and clergymen all over the country to oppress the Dissenters; and, of all the Dissenters whose history is known to us, he was perhaps the most hardly treated. In November 1660, he was flung into Bedford gaol; and there he remained, with some intervals of partial and precarious liberty, during twelve years. His persecutors tried to extort from him a promise that he would abstain from preaching; but he was convinced that he was divinely set apart and commissioned to be a teacher of righteousness, and he was fully determined to obey God rather than man. He was brought before several tribunals, laughed at, caressed, reviled, menaced, but in vain. He was facetiously told that he was quite right in thinking that he ought not to hide his gift; but that his real gift was skill in repairing old kettles. He was compared to Alexander the coppersmith. He was told that, if he would give up preaching, he should be instantly liberated. He was warned that, if he persisted in disobeying the law, he would be liable to banishment, and that, if he were found in England after a certain time, his neck would be stretched. His answer was, "If you let me out to-day, I will preach again to-morrow." Year after year he lay patiently in a dungeon, compared with which the worst prison now to be found in the island is a palace. His fortitude is the more extraordinary, because his domestic feelings were unusually strong. Indeed, he was considered by his stern brethren as somewhat too fond and indulgent a parent. He had several small children, and

among them a daughter who was blind, and whom he loved with peculiar tenderness. He could not, he said, bear even to let the wind blow on her; and now she must suffer cold and hunger; she must beg; she must be beaten; "yet," he added, "I must, I must do it." While he lay in prison he could do nothing in the way of his old trade for the support of his family. He determined, therefore, to take up a new trade. He learned to make long tagged thread laces; and many thousands of these articles were furnished by him to the hawkers. While his hands were thus busied, he had other employment for his mind and his lips. He gave religious instruction to his fellow-captives, and formed from among them a little flock, of which he was himself the pastor. He studied indefatigably the few books which he possessed. His two chief companions were the Bible and Fox's Book of Martyrs. His knowledge of the Bible was such that he might have been called a living concordance; and on the margin of his copy of the Book of Martyrs are still legible the ill spelt lines of doggrel in which he expressed his reverence for the brave sufferers, and his implacable enmity to the mystical Babylon.

At length he began to write, and, though it was some time before he discovered where his strength lay, his writings were not unsuccessful. They were coarse, indeed, but they showed a keen mother wit, a great command of the homely mother tongue, an intimate knowledge of the English Bible, and a vast and dearly bought spiritual experience. They therefore, when the corrector of the press had improved the syntax and the spelling, were well received by the humbler class of Dissenters.

Much of Bunyan's time was spent in controversy. He wrote sharply against the Quakers, whom he seems always to have held in utter abhorrence. It is, however, a remarkable

fact that he adopted one of their peculiar fashions: his practice was to write, not November or December, but eleventh month and twelfth month.

He wrote against the liturgy of the Church of England. No two things, according to him, had less affinity than the form of prayer and the spirit of prayer. Those, he said with much point, who have most of the spirit of prayer are all to be found in gaol; and those who have most zeal for the form of prayer are all to be found at the alehouse. The doctrinal articles, on the other hand, he warmly praised, and defended against some Arminian clergymen who had signed them. The most acrimonious of all his works is his answer to Edward Fowler, afterwards bishop of Gloucester, an excellent man, but not free from the taint of Pelagianism.

Bunyan had also a dispute with some of the chiefs of the sect to which he belonged. He doubtless held with perfect sincerity the distinguishing tenet of that sect, but he did not consider that tenet as one of high importance, and willingly joined in communion with pious Presbyterians and Independents. The sterner Baptists, therefore, loudly pronounced him a false brother. A controversy arose which long survived the original combatants. In our own time the cause which Bunyan had defended with rude logic and rhetoric against Kiffin and Danvers was pleaded by Robert Hall with an ingenuity and eloquence such as no polemical writer has ever surpassed.

During the years which immediately followed the Restoration, Bunyan's confinement seems to have been strict. But as the passions of 1660 cooled, as the hatred with which the Puritans had been regarded while their reign was recent gave place to pity, he was less and less harshly treated. The distress of his family, and his own patience, courage, and

piety, softened the hearts of his persecutors. Like his own Christian in the cage, he found protectors even among the crowd of Vanity Fair. The Bishop of the diocese, Dr. Barlow, is said to have interceded for him. At length the prisoner was suffered to pass most of his time beyond the walls of the gaol, on condition, as it should seem, that he remained within the town of Bedford.

He owed his complete liberation to one of the worst acts of one of the worst governments that England has ever seen. In 1671 the Cabal was in power. Charles II. had concluded the treaty by which he bound himself to set up the Roman Catholic religion in England. The first step which he took towards that end was to annul, by an unconstitutional exercise of his prerogative, all the penal statutes against the Roman Catholics; and, in order to disguise his real design, he annulled at the same time the penal statutes against Protestant nonconformists. Bunyan was consequently set at large. In the first warmth of his gratitude he published a tract in which he compared Charles to that humane and generous Persian king who, though not himself blessed with the light of the true religion, favoured the chosen people, and permitted them, after years of captivity, to rebuild their beloved temple. To candid men, who consider how much Bunyan had suffered, and how little he could guess the secret designs of the court, the unsuspicious thankfulness with which he accepted the precious boon of freedom will not appear to require any apology.

Before he left his prison he had begun the book which has made his name immortal. The history of that book is remarkable. The author was, as he tells us, writing a treatise, in which he had occasion to speak of the stages of the Christian progress. He compared that progress, as many

others had compared it, to a pilgrimage. Soon his quick wit discovered innumerable points of similarity which had escaped his predecessors. Images came crowding on his mind faster than he could put them into words, quagmires and pits, steep hills, dark and horrible glens, soft vales, sunny pastures, a gloomy castle of which the courtyard was strewn with the skulls and bones of murdered prisoners, a town all bustle and splendour, like London on the Lord Mayor's Day, and the narrow path, straight as a rule could make it, running on up hill and down hill, through city and through wilderness, to the Black River and the Shining Gate. He had found out, as most people would have said, by accident, as he would doubtless have said, by the guidance of Providence, where his powers lay. He had no suspicion, indeed, that he was producing a masterpiece. He could not guess what place his allegory would occupy in English literature; for of English literature he knew nothing. Those who suppose him to have studied the Fairy Queen might easily be confuted, if this were the proper place for a detailed examination of the passages in which the two allegories have been thought to resemble each other. The only work of fiction, in all probability, with which he could compare his Pilgrim, was his old favourite, the legend of Sir Bevis of Southampton. He would have thought it a sin to borrow any time from the serious business of his life, from his expositions, his controversies, and his lace tags, for the purpose of amusing himself with what he considered merely as a trifle. It was only, he assures us, at spare moments that he returned to the House Beautiful, the Delectable Mountains, and the Enchanted Ground. He had no assistance. Nobody but himself saw a line till the whole was complete. He then consulted his pious friends. Some were pleased. Others were much scandalized. It was a vain

story, a mere romance, about giants, and lions, and goblins, and warriors, sometimes fighting with monsters, and sometimes regaled by fair ladies in stately palaces. The loose atheistical wits at Will's might write such stuff to divert the painted Jezebels of the court: but did it become a minister of the gospel to copy the evil fashions of the world? There had been a time when the cant of such fools would have made Bunyan miserable. But that time was passed; and his mind was now in a firm and healthy state. He saw that, in employing fiction to make truth clear and goodness attractive, he was only following the example which every Christian ought to propose to himself; and he determined to print.

The *Pilgrim's Progress* stole silently into the world. Not a single copy of the first edition is known to be in existence. The year of publication has not been ascertained. It is probable that, during some months, the little volume circulated only among poor and obscure sectaries. But soon the irresistible charm of a book which gratified the imagination of the reader with all the action and scenery of a fairy tale, which exercised his ingenuity by setting him to discover a multitude of curious analogies, which interested his feelings for human beings, frail like himself, and struggling with temptations from within and from without, which every moment drew a smile from him by some stroke of quaint yet simple pleasantry, and nevertheless left on his mind a sentiment of reverence for God and of sympathy for man, began to produce its effect. In puritanical circles, from which plays and novels were strictly excluded, that effect was such as no work of genius, though it were superior to the Iliad, to Don Quixote, or to Othello, can ever produce on a mind accustomed to indulge in literary luxury. In 1678 came forth a second edition with additions; and

Papist. The object of Charles's indulgence was disguised: the object of James's indulgence was patent. Bunyan was not deceived. He exhorted his hearers to prepare themselves by fasting and prayer for the danger which menaced their civil and religious liberties, and refused even to speak to the courtier who came down to remodel the corporation of Bedford, and who, as was supposed, had it in charge to offer some municipal dignity to the Bishop of the Baptists.

Bunyan did not live to see the Revolution. In the summer of 1688 he undertook to plead the cause of a son with an angry father, and at length prevailed on the old man not to disinherit the young one. This good work cost the benevolent intercessor his life. He had to ride through heavy rain. He came drenched to his lodgings on Snow Hill, was seized with a violent fever, and died in a few days. He was buried in Bunhill Fields; and the spot where he lies is still regarded by the nonconformists with a feeling which seems scarcely in harmony with the stern spirit of their theology. Many puritans to whom the respect paid by Roman Catholics to the reliques and tombs of saints seemed childish or sinful, are said to have begged with their dying breath that their coffins might be placed as near as possible to the coffin of the author of the *Pilgrim's Progress*.

The fame of Bunyan during his life, and during the century which followed his death, was indeed great, but was almost entirely confined to religious families of the middle and lower classes. Very seldom was he during that time mentioned with respect by any writer of great literary eminence. Young coupled his prose with the poetry of the wretched D'Urfey. In the Spiritual Quixote, the adventures of Christian are ranked with those of Jack the Giant-Killer and John Hickathrift. Cowper ventured to praise the great allegorist, but did not venture to name him. It is a signi-

ficant circumstance that, till a recent period, all the numerous editions of the *Pilgrim's Progress* were evidently meant for the cottage and the servant's hall. The paper, the printing, the plates, were all of the meanest description. In general, when the educated minority and the common people differ about the merit of a book, the opinion of the educated minority finally prevails. The *Pilgrim's Progress* is perhaps the only book about which, after the lapse of a hundred years, the educated minority has come over to the opinion of the common people.

The attempts which have been made to improve and to imitate this book are not to be numbered. It has been done into verse: it has been done into modern English. The Pilgrimage of Tender Conscience, the Pilgrimage of Good Intent, the Pilgrimage of Seek Truth, the Pilgrimage of Theophilus, the Infant Pilgrim, the Hindoo Pilgrim, are among the many feeble copies of the great original. But the peculiar glory of Bunyan is that those who most hated his doctrines have tried to borrow the help of his genius. A Catholic version of his parable may be seen with the head of the Virgin in the title page. On the other hand, those Antinomians for whom his Calvinism is not strong enough, may study the pilgrimage of Hephzibah, in which nothing will be found which can be construed into an admission of free agency and universal redemption. But the most extraordinary of all the acts of Vandalism by which a fine work of art was ever defaced was committed so late as the year 1853. It was determined to transform the *Pilgrim's Progress* into a Tractarian book. The task was not easy: for it was necessary to make the two sacraments the most prominent objects in the allegory; and of all Christian theologians, avowed Quakers excepted, Bunyan was the one in whose system the sacraments held the least prominent place. However, the

then the demand became immense. In the four following years the book was reprinted six times. The eighth edition, which contains the last improvements made by the author, was published in 1682, the ninth in 1684, the tenth in 1685. The help of the engraver had early been called in; and tens of thousands of children looked with terror and delight on execrable copperplates, which represented Christian thrusting his sword into Apollyon, or writhing in the grasp of Giant Despair. In Scotland, and in some of the colonies, the Pilgrim was even more popular than in his native country. Bunyan has told us, with very pardonable vanity, that in New England his dream was the daily subject of the conversation of thousands, and was thought worthy to appear in the most superb binding. He had numerous admirers in Holland, and among the Huguenots of France. With the pleasures, however, he experienced some of the pains of eminence. Knavish booksellers put forth volumes of trash under his name, and envious scribblers maintained it to be impossible that the poor ignorant tinker should really be the author of the book which was called his.

He took the best way to confound both those who counterfeited him and those who slandered him. He continued to work the Gold-field which he had discovered, and to draw from it new treasures, not indeed with quite such ease and in quite such abundance as when the precious soil was still virgin, but yet with success which left all competition far behind. In 1684 appeared the second part of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. It was soon followed by the *Holy War*, which, if the *Pilgrim's Progress* did not exist, would be the best allegory that ever was written.

Bunyan's place in society was now very different from what it had been. There had been a time when many Dissenting ministers, who could talk Latin and read Greek,

had affected to treat him with scorn. But his fame and influence now far exceeded theirs. He had so great an authority among the Baptists that he was popularly called Bishop Bunyan. His episcopal visitations were annual. From Bedford he rode every year to London, and preached there to large and attentive congregations. From London he went his circuit through the country, animating the zeal of his brethren, collecting and distributing alms, and making up quarrels. The magistrates seem in general to have given him little trouble. But there is reason to believe that, in the year 1685, he was in some danger of again occupying his old quarters in Bedford gaol. In that year the rash and wicked enterprise of Monmouth gave the government a pretext for prosecuting the nonconformists; and scarcely one eminent divine of the Presbyterian, Independent, or Baptist persuasion remained unmolested. Baxter was in prison: Howe was driven into exile: Henry was arrested. Two eminent Baptists, with whom Bunyan had been engaged in controversy, were in great peril and distress. Danvers was in danger of being hanged; and Kiffin's grandsons were actually hanged. The tradition is that, during those evil days, Bunyan was forced to disguise himself as a waggoner, and that he preached to his congregation at Bedford in a smock-frock, with a cart-whip in his hand. But soon a great change took place. James the Second was at open war with the church, and found it necessary to court the Dissenters. Some of the creatures of the government tried to secure the aid of Bunyan. They probably knew that he had written in praise of the indulgence of 1672, and therefore hoped that he might be equally pleased with the indulgence of 1687. But fifteen years of thought, observation, and commerce with the world had made him wiser. Nor were the cases exactly parallel. Charles was a professed Protestant: James was a professed

Papist. The object of Charles's indulgence was disguised: the object of James's indulgence was patent. Bunyan was not deceived. He exhorted his hearers to prepare themselves by fasting and prayer for the danger which menaced their civil and religious liberties, and refused even to speak to the courtier who came down to remodel the corporation of Bedford, and who, as was supposed, had it in charge to offer some municipal dignity to the Bishop of the Baptists.

Bunyan did not live to see the Revolution. In the summer of 1688 he undertook to plead the cause of a son with an angry father, and at length prevailed on the old man not to disinherit the young one. This good work cost the benevolent intercessor his life. He had to ride through heavy rain. He came drenched to his lodgings on Snow Hill, was seized with a violent fever, and died in a few days. He was buried in Bunhill Fields; and the spot where he lies is still regarded by the nonconformists with a feeling which seems scarcely in harmony with the stern spirit of their theology. Many puritans to whom the respect paid by Roman Catholics to the reliques and tombs of saints seemed childish or sinful, are said to have begged with their dying breath that their coffins might be placed as near as possible to the coffin of the author of the *Pilgrim's Progress*.

The fame of Bunyan during his life, and during the century which followed his death, was indeed great, but was almost entirely confined to religious families of the middle and lower classes. Very seldom was he during that time mentioned with respect by any writer of great literary eminence. Young coupled his prose with the poetry of the wretched D'Urfey. In the Spiritual Quixote, the adventures of Christian are ranked with those of Jack the Giant-Killer and John Hickathrift. Cowper ventured to praise the great allegorist, but did not venture to name him. It is a signi-

ficant circumstance that, till a recent period, all the numerous editions of the *Pilgrim's Progress* were evidently meant for the cottage and the servant's hall. The paper, the printing, the plates, were all of the meanest description. In general, when the educated minority and the common people differ about the merit of a book, the opinion of the educated minority finally prevails. The *Pilgrim's Progress* is perhaps the only book about which, after the lapse of a hundred years, the educated minority has come over to the opinion of the common people.

The attempts which have been made to improve and to imitate this book are not to be numbered. It has been done into verse: it has been done into modern English. The Pilgrimage of Tender Conscience, the Pilgrimage of Good Intent, the Pilgrimage of Seek Truth, the Pilgrimage of Theophilus, the Infant Pilgrim, the Hindoo Pilgrim, are among the many feeble copies of the great original. But the peculiar glory of Bunyan is that those who most hated his doctrines have tried to borrow the help of his genius. A Catholic version of his parable may be seen with the head of the Virgin in the title page. On the other hand, those Antinomians for whom his Calvinism is not strong enough, may study the pilgrimage of Hephzibah, in which nothing will be found which can be construed into an admission of free agency and universal redemption. But the most extraordinary of all the acts of Vandalism by which a fine work of art was ever defaced was committed so late as the year 1853. It was determined to transform the *Pilgrim's Progress* into a Tractarian book. The task was not easy: for it was necessary to make the two sacraments the most prominent objects in the allegory; and of all Christian theologians, avowed Quakers excepted, Bunyan was the one in whose system the sacraments held the least prominent place. However, the

Wicket Gate became a type of baptism, and the House Beautiful of the Eucharist. The effect of this change is such as assuredly the ingenious person who made it never contemplated. For, as not a single pilgrim passes through the Wicket Gate in infancy, and as Faithful hurries past the House Beautiful without stopping, the lesson which the fable in its altered shape teaches, is that none but adults ought to be baptized, and that the Eucharist may safely be neglected. Nobody would have discovered from the original *Pilgrim's Progress* that the author was not a Pædobaptist. To turn his book into a book against Pædobaptism was an achievement reserved for an Anglo-Catholic divine. Such blunders must necessarily be committed by every man who mutilates parts of a great work, without taking a comprehensive view of the whole.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

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GOLDSMITH, OLIVER, one of the most pleasing English writers of the eighteenth century. He was of a Protestant and Saxon family which had been long settled in Ireland, and which had, like most other Protestant and Saxon families, been, in troubled times, harassed and put in fear by the native population. His father, Charles Goldsmith, studied in the reign of Queen Anne at the diocesan school of Elphin, became attached to the daughter of the schoolmaster, married her, took orders, and settled at a place called Pallas in the county of Longford. There he with difficulty supported his wife and children on what he could earn, partly as a curate and partly as a farmer.

At Pallas Oliver Goldsmith was born in November 1728. That spot was then, for all practical purposes, almost as remote from the busy and splendid capital in which his later years were passed, as any clearing in Upper Canada or any sheep-walk in Australasia now is. Even at this day those enthusiasts who venture to make a pilgrimage to the birth-place of the poet are forced to perform the latter part of their journey on foot. The hamlet lies far from any high road, on a dreary plain which, in wet weather, is often a lake. The lanes would break any jaunting car to pieces; and there are ruts and sloughs through which the most strongly built wheels cannot be dragged.

While Oliver was still a child his father was presented to a living worth about L. 200 a-year, in the county of Westmeath. The family accordingly quitted their cottage in the wilderness for a spacious house on a frequented road, near the village of Lissoy. Here the boy was taught his letters by a maid-servant, and was sent in his seventh year to a village school kept by an old quartermaster on half-pay, who professed to teach nothing but reading, writing and arithmetic, but who had an inexhaustible fund of stories about ghosts, banshees and fairies, about the great Rapparee chiefs, Baldearg O'Donnell and galloping Hogan, and about the exploits of Peterborough and Stanhope, the surprise of Monjuich, and the glorious disaster of Brihuega. This man must have been of the Protestant religion; but he was of the aboriginal race, and not only spoke the Irish language, but could pour forth unpremeditated Irish verses. Oliver early became, and through life continued to be, a passionate admirer of the Irish music, and especially of the compositions of Carolan, some of the last notes of whose harp he heard. It ought to be added that Oliver, though by birth one of the Englishry, and though connected by numerous ties with the Established Church, never showed the least sign of that contemptuous antipathy with which, in his days, the ruling minority in Ireland too generally regarded the subject majority. So far indeed was he from sharing in the opinions and feelings of the caste to which he belonged that he conceived an aversion to the Glorious and Immortal Memory, and, even when George the Third was on the throne, maintained that nothing but the restoration of the banished dynasty could save the country.

From the humble academy kept by the old soldier Goldsmith was removed in his ninth year. He went to several grammar-schools and acquired some knowledge of the ancient languages. His life at this time seems to have been far from

happy. He had, as appears from the admirable portrait of him at Knowle, features harsh even to ugliness. The small-pox had set its mark on him with more than usual severity. His stature was small, and his limbs ill put together. Among boys little tenderness is shown to personal defects; and the ridicule excited by poor Oliver's appearance was heightened by a peculiar simplicity and a disposition to blunder which he retained to the last. He became the common butt of boys and masters, was pointed at as a fright in the play-ground, and flogged as a dunce in the school-room. When he had risen to eminence, those who had once derided him ransacked their memory for the events of his early years, and recited repartees and couplets which had dropped from him, and which, though little noticed at the time, were supposed, a quarter of a century later, to indicate the powers which produced the *Vicar of Wakefield* and the *Deserted Village*.

In his seventeenth year Oliver went up to Trinity College, Dublin, as a sizar. The sizars paid nothing for food and tuition, and very little for lodging; but they had to perform some menial services from which they have long been relieved. They swept the court: they carried up the dinner to the fellows' table, and changed the plates and poured out the ale of the rulers of the society. Goldsmith was quartered, not alone, in a garret, on the window of which his name, scrawled by himself, is still read with interest. From such garrets many men of less parts than his have made their way to the woolsack or to the episcopal bench. But Goldsmith, while he suffered all the humiliations, threw away all the advantages of his situation. He neglected the studies of the place, stood low at the examinations, was turned down to the bottom of his class for playing the buffoon in the lecture room, was severely reprimanded for pumping on a constable, and was caned by a

brutal tutor for giving a ball in the attic story of the college to some gay youths and damsels from the city.

While Oliver was leading at Dublin a life divided between squalid distress and squalid dissipation, his father died, leaving a mere pittance. The youth obtained his bachelor's degree, and left the university. During some time the humble dwelling to which his widowed mother had retired was his home. He was now in his twenty-first year; it was necessary that he should do something; and his education seemed to have fitted him to do nothing but to dress himself in gaudy colours, of which he was as fond as a magpie, to take a hand at cards, to sing Irish airs, to play the flute, to angle in summer, and to tell ghost stories by the fire in winter. He tried five or six professions in turn without success. He applied for ordination; but, as he applied in scarlet clothes, he was speedily turned out of the episcopal palace. He then became tutor in an opulent family, but soon quitted his situation in consequence of a dispute about play. Then he determined to emigrate to America. His relations, with much satisfaction, saw him set out for Cork on a good horse, with thirty pounds in his pocket. But in six weeks he came back on a miserable hack, without a penny, and informed his mother that the ship in which he had taken his passage, having got a fair wind while he was at a party of pleasure, had sailed without him. Then he resolved to study the law. A generous kinsman advanced fifty pounds. With this sum Goldsmith went to Dublin, was enticed into a gaming house, and lost every shilling. He then thought of medicine. A small purse was made up; and in his twenty-fourth year he was sent to Edinburgh. At Edinburgh he passed eighteen months in nominal attendance on lectures, and picked up some superficial information about chemistry and natural history. Thence he went to Leyden,

still pretending to study physic. He left that celebrated university, the third university at which he had resided, in his twenty-seventh year, without a degree, with the merest smattering of medical knowledge, and with no property but his clothes and his flute. His flute, however, proved a useful friend. He rambled on foot through Flanders, France, and Switzerland, playing tunes which everywhere set the peasantry dancing, and which often procured for him a supper and a bed. He wandered as far as Italy. His musical performances, indeed, were not to the taste of the Italians; but he contrived to live on the alms which he obtained at the gates of convents. It should, however, be observed, that the stories which he told about this part of his life ought to be received with great caution; for strict veracity was never one of his virtues; and a man who is ordinarily inaccurate in narration is likely to be more than ordinarily inaccurate when he talks about his own travels. Goldsmith, indeed, was so regardless of truth as to assert in print that he was present at a most interesting conversation between Voltaire and Fontenelle, and that this conversation took place at Paris. Now it is certain that Voltaire never was within a hundred leagues of Paris during the whole time which Goldsmith passed on the continent.

In 1756 the wanderer landed at Dover, without a shilling, without a friend, and without a calling. He had, indeed, if his own unsupported evidence may be trusted, obtained from the University of Padua a doctor's degree; but this dignity proved utterly useless to him. In England his flute was not in request: there were no convents; and he was forced to have recourse to a series of desperate expedients. He turned strolling player; but his face and figure were ill suited to the boards even of the humblest theatre. He pounded drugs and ran about London with phials for charitable chemists. He

joined a swarm of beggars, which made its nest in Axe Yard. He was for a time usher of a school, and felt the miseries and humiliations of this situation so keenly, that he thought it a promotion to be permitted to earn his bread as a bookseller's hack; but he soon found the new yoke more galling than the old one, and was glad to become an usher again. He obtained a medical appointment in the service of the East India Company; but the appointment was speedily revoked. Why it was revoked we are not told. The subject was one on which he never liked to talk. It is probable that he was incompetent to perform the duties of the place. Then he presented himself at Surgeons' Hall for examination, as mate to a naval hospital. Even to so humble a post he was found unequal. By this time the schoolmaster whom he had served for a morsel of food and the third part of a bed was no more. Nothing remained but to return to the lowest drudgery of literature. Goldsmith took a garret in a miserable court, to which he had to climb from the brink of Fleet Ditch by a dizzy ladder of flagstones called Breakneck Steps. The court and the ascent have long disappeared; but old Londoners well remember both. Here, at thirty, the unlucky adventurer sat down to toil like a galley slave.

In the succeeding six years he sent to the press some things which have survived, and many which have perished. He produced articles for reviews, magazines, and newspapers; children's books, which, bound in gilt paper and adorned with hideous woodcuts, appeared in the window of the once far-famed shop at the corner of Saint Paul's Churchyard; *An Inquiry into the State of Polite Learning in Europe*, which, though of little or no value, is still reprinted among his works; a *Life of Beau Nash*, which is not reprinted, though it well deserves to be so; a superficial and incorrect, but very readable, *History of England*, in a series of letters purporting

to be addressed by a nobleman to his son; and some very lively and amusing *Sketches of London Society*, in a series of letters purporting to be addressed by a Chinese traveller to his friends. All these works were anonymous; but some of them were well known to be Goldsmith's; and he gradually rose in the estimation of the booksellers for whom he drudged. He was, indeed, emphatically a popular writer. For accurate research or grave disquisition he was not well qualified by nature or by education. He knew nothing accurately: his reading had been desultory; nor had he meditated deeply on what he had read. He had seen much of the world; but he had noticed and retained little more of what he had seen than some grotesque incidents and characters which had happened to strike his fancy. But, though his mind was very scantily stored with materials, he used what materials he had in such a way as to produce a wonderful effect. There have been many greater writers; but perhaps no writer was ever more uniformly agreeable. His style was always pure and easy, and, on proper occasions, pointed and energetic. His narratives were always amusing, his descriptions always picturesque, his humour rich and joyous, yet not without an occasional tinge of amiable sadness. About everything that he wrote, serious or sportive, there was a certain natural grace and decorum, hardly to be expected from a man a great part of whose life had been passed among thieves and beggars, streetwalkers and merryandrews, in those squalid dens which are the reproach of great capitals.

As his name gradually became known, the circle of his acquaintance widened. He was introduced to Johnson, who was then considered as the first of living English writers; to Reynolds, the first of English painters; and to Burke, who had not yet entered parliament, but had distinguished himself greatly by his writings and by the eloquence of his con-

versation. With these eminent men Goldsmith became intimate. In 1763 he was one of the nine original members of that celebrated fraternity which has sometimes been called the Literary Club, but which has always disclaimed that epithet, and still glories in the simple name of The Club.

By this time Goldsmith had quitted his miserable dwelling at the top of Breakneck Steps, and had taken chambers in the more civilised region of the Inns of Court. But he was still often reduced to pitiable shifts. Towards the close of 1764 his rent was so long in arrear that his landlady one morning called in the help of a sheriff's officer. The debtor, in great perplexity, despatched a messenger to Johnson; and Johnson, always friendly, though often surly, sent back the messenger with a guinea, and promised to follow speedily. He came, and found that Goldsmith had changed the guinea, and was railing at the landlady over a bottle of Madeira. Johnson put the cork into the bottle, and entreated his friend to consider calmly how money was to be procured. Goldsmith said that he had a novel ready for the press. Johnson glanced at the manuscript, saw that there were good things in it, took it to a bookseller, sold it for L. 60, and soon returned with the money. The rent was paid; and the sheriff's officer withdrew. According to one story, Goldsmith gave his landlady a sharp reprimand for her treatment of him; according to another, he insisted on her joining him in a bowl of punch. Both stories are probably true. The novel which was thus ushered into the world was the *Vicar of Wakefield.*

But before the *Vicar of Wakefield* appeared in print, came the great crisis of Goldsmith's literary life. In Christmas week 1764, he published a poem, entitled the *Traveller.* It was the first work to which he had put his name; and it at once raised him to the rank of a legitimate English classic. The opinion of the most skilful critics was, that nothing finer

had appeared in verse since the fourth book of the *Dunciad*. In one respect the *Traveller* differs from all Goldsmith's other writings. In general his designs were bad, and his execution good. In the *Traveller*, the execution, though deserving of much praise, is far inferior to the design. No philosophical poem, ancient or modern, has a plan so noble, and at the same time so simple. An English wanderer, seated on a crag among the Alps, near the point where three great countries meet, looks down on the boundless prospect, reviews his long pilgrimage, recalls the varieties of scenery, of climate, of government, of religion, of national character, which he has observed, and comes to the conclusion, just or unjust, that our happiness depends little on political institutions, and much on the temper and regulation of our own minds.

While the fourth edition of the *Traveller* was on the counters of the booksellers, the *Vicar of Wakefield* appeared, and rapidly obtained a popularity which has lasted down to our own time, and which is likely to last as long as our language. The fable is indeed one of the worst that ever was constructed. It wants, not merely that probability which ought to be found in a tale of common English life, but that consistency which ought to be found even in the wildest fiction about witches, giants, and fairies. But the earlier chapters have all the sweetness of pastoral poetry, together with all the vivacity of comedy. Moses and his spectacles, the vicar and his monogamy, the sharper and his cosmogony, the squire proving from Aristotle that relatives are related, Olivia preparing herself for the arduous task of converting a rakish lover by studying the controversy between Robinson Crusoe and Friday, the great ladies with their scandal about Sir Tomkyn's amours and Dr. Burdock's verses, and Mr. Burchell with his "Fudge," have caused as much harmless mirth as has ever been caused by matter packed into so small a number of

pages. The latter part of the tale is unworthy of the beginning. As we approach the catastrophe, the absurdities lie thicker and thicker; and the gleams of pleasantry become rarer and rarer.

The success which had attended Goldsmith as a novelist emboldened him to try his fortune as a dramatist. He wrote the *Goodnatured Man*, a piece which had a worse fate than it deserved. Garrick refused to produce it at Drury Lane. It was acted at Covent Garden in 1768, but was coldly received. The author, however, cleared by his benefit nights, and by the sale of the copyright, no less than L. 500, five times as much as he had made by the *Traveller* and the *Vicar of Wakefield* together. The plot of the *Goodnatured Man* is, like almost all Goldsmith's plots, very ill constructed. But some passages are exquisitely ludicrous; much more ludicrous, indeed, than suited the taste of the town at that time. A canting, mawkish play, entitled *False Delicacy*, had just had an immense run. Sentimentality was all the mode. During some years, more tears were shed at comedies than at tragedies; and a pleasantry which moved the audience to anything more than a grave smile was reprobated as low. It is not strange, therefore, that the very best scene in the *Goodnatured Man*, that in which Miss Richland finds her lover attended by the bailiff and the bailiff's follower in full court dresses, should have been mercilessly hissed, and should have been omitted after the first night.

In 1770 appeared the *Deserted Village*. In mere diction and versification this celebrated poem is fully equal, perhaps superior to the *Traveller;* and it is generally preferred to the *Traveller* by that large class of readers who think, with Bayes in the *Rehearsal*, that the only use of a plan is to bring in fine things. More discerning judges, however, while they admire the beauty of the details, are shocked by one unpardonable

fault which pervades the whole. The fault which we mean is not that theory about wealth and luxury which has so often been censured by political economists. The theory is indeed false: but the poem, considered merely as a poem, is not necessarily the worse on that account. The finest poem in the Latin language, indeed the finest didactic poem in any language, was written in defence of the silliest and meanest of all systems of natural and moral philosophy. A poet may easily be pardoned for reasoning ill; but he cannot be pardoned for describing ill, for observing the world in which he lives so carelessly that his portraits bear no resemblance to the originals, for exhibiting as copies from real life monstrous combinations of things which never were and never could be found together. What would be thought of a painter who should mix August and January in one landscape, who should introduce a frozen river into a harvest scene? Would it be a sufficient defence of such a picture to say that every part was exquisitely coloured, that the green hedges, the apple-trees loaded with fruit, the waggons reeling under the yellow sheaves, and the sun-burned reapers wiping their foreheads were very fine, and that the ice and the boys sliding were also very fine? To such a picture the *Deserted Village* bears a great resemblance. It is made up of incongruous parts. The village in its happy days is a true English village. The village in its decay is an Irish village. The felicity and the misery which Goldsmith has brought close together belong to two different countries, and to two different stages in the progress of society. He had assuredly never seen in his native island such a rural paradise, such a seat of plenty, content, and tranquillity, as his *Auburn*. He had assuredly never seen in England all the inhabitants of such a paradise turned out of their homes in one day and forced to emigrate in a body to America. The hamlet he had probably seen in Kent: the

ejectment he had probably seen in Munster; but by joining the two, he has produced something which never was and never will be seen in any part of the world.

In 1773 Goldsmith tried his chance at Covent Garden with a second play, *She Stoops to Conquer*. The manager was not without great difficulty induced to bring this piece out. The sentimental comedy still reigned, and Goldsmith's comedies were not sentimental. The *Goodnatured Man* had been too funny to succeed; yet the mirth of the *Goodnatured Man* was sober when compared with the rich drollery of *She Stoops to Conquer*, which is, in truth, an incomparable farce in five acts. On this occasion, however, genius triumphed. Pit, boxes, and galleries, were in a constant roar of laughter. If any bigoted admirer of Kelly and Cumberland ventured to hiss or groan, he was speedily silenced by a general cry of "turn him out," or "throw him over." Two generations have since confirmed the verdict which was pronounced on that night.

While Goldsmith was writing the *Deserted Village* and *She Stoops to Conquer*, he was employed on works of a very different kind, works from which he derived little reputation but much profit. He compiled for the use of schools a *History of Rome* by which he made L. 300, a *History of England* by which he made L. 600, a *History of Greece* for which he received L. 250, a *Natural History*, for which the booksellers covenanted to pay him 800 guineas. These works he produced without any elaborate research, by merely selecting, abridging, and translating into his own clear, pure, and flowing language, what he found in books well known to the world, but too bulky or too dry for boys and girls. He committed some strange blunders: for he knew nothing with accuracy. Thus in his *History of England* he tells us that Naseby is in Yorkshire; nor did he correct this mistake when the book was

reprinted. He was very nearly hoaxed into putting into the *History of Greece* an account of a battle between Alexander the Great and Montezuma. In his *Animated Nature* he relates, with faith and with perfect gravity, all the most absurd lies which he could find in books of travels about gigantic Patagónians, monkeys that preach sermons, nightingales that repeat long conversations. "If he can tell a horse from a cow," said Johnson, "that is the extent of his knowledge of zoology." How little Goldsmith was qualified to write about the physical sciences is sufficiently proved by two anecdotes. He on one occasion denied that the sun is longer in the northern than in the southern signs. It was vain to cite the authority of Maupertuis. "Maupertuis!" he cried, "I understand those matters better than Maupertuis." On another occasion he, in defiance of the evidence of his own senses, maintained obstinately, and even angrily, that he chewed his dinner by moving his upper jaw.

Yet, ignorant as Goldsmith was, few writers have done more to make the first steps in the laborious road to knowledge easy and pleasant. His compilations are widely distinguished from the compilations of ordinary bookmakers. He was a great, perhaps an unequalled, master of the arts of selection and condensation. In these respects his histories of Rome and of England, and still more his own abridgments of these histories, well deserved to be studied. In general nothing is less attractive than an epitome: but the epitomes of Goldsmith, even when most concise, are always amusing; and to read them is considered by intelligent children, not as a task but as a pleasure.

Goldsmith might now be considered as a prosperous man. He had the means of living in comfort, and even in what to

one who had so often slept in barns and on bulks must have been luxury. His fame was great and was constantly rising. He lived in what was intellectually far the best society of the kingdom, in a society in which no talent or accomplishment was wanting, and in which the art of conversation was cultivated with splendid success. There probably were never four talkers more admirable in four different ways than Johnson, Burke, Beauclerk, and Garrick; and Goldsmith was on terms of intimacy with all the four. He aspired to share in their colloquial renown; but never was ambition more unfortunate. It may seem strange that a man who wrote with so much perspicuity, vivacity, and grace, should have been, whenever he took a part in conversation, an empty, noisy, blundering, rattle. But on this point the evidence is overwhelming. So extraordinary was the contrast between Goldsmith's published works and the silly things which he said, that Horace Walpole described him as an inspired idiot. "Noll," said Garrick, "wrote like an angel, and talked like poor Pol." Chamier declared that it was a hard exercise of faith to believe that so foolish a chatterer could have really written the *Traveller*. Even Boswell could say, with contemptuous compassion, that he liked very well to hear honest Goldsmith run on. "Yes, sir," said Johnson, "but he should not like to bear himself." Minds differ as rivers differ. There are transparent and sparkling rivers from which it is delightful to drink as they flow; to such rivers the minds of such men as Burke and Johnson may be compared. But there are rivers of which the water when first drawn is turbid and noisome, but becomes pellucid as crystal and delicious to the taste if it be suffered to stand till it has deposited a sediment; and such a river is a type of the mind of Goldsmith. His first thoughts on every subject were confused even to

absurdity, but they required only a little time to work themselves clear. When he wrote they had that time; and therefore his readers pronounced him a man of genius: but when he talked he talked nonsense, and made himself the laughing-stock of his hearers. He was painfully sensible of his inferiority in conversation; he felt every failure keenly; yet he had not sufficient judgment and self-command to hold his tongue. His animal spirits and vanity were always impelling him to try to do the one thing which he could not do. After every attempt he felt that he had exposed himself, and writhed with shame and vexation; yet the next moment he began again.

His associates seem to have regarded him with kindness, which, in spite of their admiration of his writings, was not unmixed with contempt. In truth, there was in his character much to love, but very little to respect. His heart was soft even to weakness: he was so generous, that he quite forgot to be just; he forgave injuries so readily, that he might be said to invite them, and was so liberal to beggars, that he had nothing left for his tailor and his butcher. He was vain, sensual, frivolous, profuse, improvident. One vice of a darker shade was imputed to him, envy. But there is not the least reason to believe that this bad passion, though it sometimes made him wince and utter fretful exclamations, ever impelled him to injure by wicked arts the reputation of any of his rivals. The truth probably is, that he was not more envious, but merely less prudent than his neighbours. His heart was on his lips. All those small jealousies, which are but too common among men of letters, but which a man of the world does his best to conceal, Goldsmith avowed with the simplicity of a child. When he was envious, instead of affecting indifference, instead of damning with faint praise,

instead of doing injuries slily and in the dark, he told everybody that he was envious. "Do not, pray, do not, talk of Johnson in such terms," he said to Boswell; "you harrow up my very soul." George Steevens and Cumberland were men far too cunning to say such a thing. They would have echoed the praises of the man whom they envied, and then have sent to the newspapers anonymous libels upon him. Both what was good and what was bad in Goldsmith's character was to his associates a perfect security that he would never commit such villany. He was neither ill-natured enough, nor long-headed enough, to be guilty of any malicious act which required contrivance and disguise.

Goldsmith has sometimes been represented as a man of genius, cruelly treated by the world, and doomed to struggle with difficulties, which at last broke his heart. But no representation can be more remote from the truth. He did, indeed, go through much sharp misery before he had done anything considerable in literature. But after his name had appeared on the title-page of the *Traveller*, he had none but himself to blame for his distresses. His average income, during the last seven years of his life, certainly exceeded L. 400 a-year, and L. 400 a-year ranked, among the incomes of that day, at least as high as L. 800 a-year would rank at present. A single man living in the Temple, with L. 400 a-year, might then be called opulent. Not one in ten of the young gentlemen of good families who were studying the law there had so much. But all the wealth which Lord Clive had brought from Bengal, and Sir Lawrence Dundas from Germany, joined together, would not have sufficed for Goldsmith. He spent twice as much as he had. He wore fine clothes, gave dinners of several courses, paid court to venal beauties. He had also, it should be remembered, to the honour of his heart,

though not of his head, a guinea, or five, or ten, according to the state of his purse, ready for any tale of distress, true or false. But it was not in dress or feasting, in promiscuous amours or promiscuous charities, that his chief expense lay. He had been from boyhood a gambler, and at once the most sanguine and the most unskilful of gamblers. For a time he put off the day of inevitable ruin by temporary expedients. He obtained advances from booksellers, by promising to execute works which he never began. But at length this source of supply failed. He owed more than L. 2000; and he saw no hope of extrication from his embarrassments. His spirits and health gave way. He was attacked by a nervous fever, which he thought himself competent to treat. It would have been happy for him if his medical skill had been appreciated as justly by himself as by others. Notwithstanding the degree which he pretended to have received at Padua, he could procure no patients. "I do not practise," he once said; "I make it a rule to prescribe only for my friends." "Pray, dear Doctor," said Beauclerk, "alter your rule; and prescribe only for your enemies." Goldsmith now, in spite of this excellent advice, prescribed for himself. The remedy aggravated the malady. The sick man was induced to call in real physicians; and they at one time imagined that they had cured the disease. Still his weakness and restlessness continued. He could get no sleep. He could take no food. "You are worse," said one of his medical attendants, "than you should be from the degree of fever which you have. Is your mind at ease?" "No; it is not," were the last recorded words of Oliver Goldsmith. He died on the 3d of April 1774, in his forty-sixth year. He was laid in the churchyard of the Temple; but the spot was not marked by any inscription, and is now forgotten.

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

JOHNSON, SAMUEL, one of the most eminent English writers of the eighteenth century, was the son of Michael Johnson, who was, at the beginning of that century, a magistrate of Lichfield, and a bookseller of great note in the midland counties. Michael's abilities and attainments seem to have been considerable. He was so well acquainted with the contents of the volumes which he exposed to sale, that the country rectors of Staffordshire and Worcestershire thought him an oracle on points of learning. Between him and the clergy, indeed, there was a strong religious and political sympathy. He was a zealous churchman, and, though he had qualified himself for municipal office by taking the oaths to the sovereigns in possession, was to the last a Jacobite in heart. At his house, a house which is still pointed out to every traveller who visits Lichfield, Samuel was born on the 18th of September 1709. In the child the physical, intellectual, and moral peculiarities which afterwards distinguished the man were plainly discernible; great muscular strength accompanied by much awkwardness and many infirmities; great quickness of parts, with a morbid propensity to sloth and procrastination; a kind and generous heart, with a gloomy and irritable temper. He had inherited from his ancestors a scrofulous taint, which it was beyond the power of medicine to remove. His parents were weak enough to

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believe that the royal touch was a specific for this malady. In his third year he was taken up to London, inspected by the court surgeon, prayed over by the court chaplains, and stroked and presented with a piece of gold by Queen Anne. One of his earliest recollections was that of a stately lady in a diamond stomacher and a long black hood. Her hand was applied in vain. The boy's features, which were originally noble and not irregular, were distorted by his malady. His cheeks were deeply scarred. He lost for a time the sight of one eye; and he saw but very imperfectly with the other. But the force of his mind overcame every impediment. Indolent as he was, he acquired knowledge with such ease and rapidity, that at every school to which he was sent he was soon the best scholar. From sixteen to eighteen he resided at home, and was left to his own devices. He learned much at this time, though his studies were without guidance and without plan. He ransacked his father's shelves, dipped into a multitude of books, read what was interesting, and passed over what was dull. An ordinary lad would have acquired little or no useful knowledge in such a way: but much that was dull to ordinary lads was interesting to Samuel. He read little Greek; for his proficiency in that language was not such that he could take much pleasure in the masters of Attic poetry and eloquence. But he had left school a good Latinist, and he soon acquired, in the large and miscellaneous library of which he now had the command, an extensive knowledge of Latin literature. That Augustan delicacy of taste, which is the boast of the great public schools of England, he never possessed. But he was early familiar with some classical writers, who were quite unknown to the best scholars in the sixth form at Eton. He was peculiarly attracted by the works of the great restorers of learning. Once, while searching for some apples, he found

a huge folio volume of Petrarch's works. The name excited his curiosity, and he eagerly devoured hundreds of pages. Indeed, the diction and versification of his own Latin compositions show that he had paid at least as much attention to modern copies from the antique as to the original models.

While he was thus irregularly educating himself, his family was sinking into hopeless poverty. Old Michael Johnson was much better qualified to pore upon books, and to talk about them, than to trade in them. His business declined: his debts increased: it was with difficulty that the daily expenses of his household were defrayed. It was out of his power to support his son at either university; but a wealthy neighbour offered assistance; and, in reliance on promises which proved to be of very little value, Samuel was entered at Pembroke College, Oxford. When the young scholar presented himself to the rulers of that society, they were amazed not more by his ungainly figure and eccentric manners than by the quantity of extensive and curious information which he had picked up during many months of desultory, but not unprofitable study. On the first day of his residence he surprised his teachers by quoting Macrobius; and one of the most learned among them declared, that he had never known a freshman of equal attainments.

At Oxford, Johnson resided during about three years. He was poor, even to raggedness; and his appearance excited a mirth and pity, which were equally intolerable to his haughty spirit. He was driven from the quadrangle of Christ Church by the sneering looks which the members of that aristocratical society cast at the holes in his shoes. Some charitable person placed a new pair at his door; but he spurned them away in a fury. Distress made him, not servile, but reckless and ungovernable. No opulent gentleman commoner, panting for one-and-twenty, could have

treated the academical authorities with more gross disrespect. The needy scholar was generally to be seen under the gate of Pembroke, a gate now adorned with his effigy, haranguing a circle of lads, over whom, in spite of his tattered gown and dirty linen, his wit and audacity gave him an undisputed ascendency. In every mutiny against the discipline of the college he was the ringleader. Much was pardoned, however, to a youth so highly distinguished by abilities and acquirements. He had early made himself known by turning Pope's Messiah into Latin verse. The style and rhythm, indeed, were not exactly Virgilian; but the translation found many admirers, and was read with pleasure by Pope himself.

The time drew near at which Johnson would, in the ordinary course of things, have become a Bachelor of Arts: but he was at the end of his resources. Those promises of support on which he had relied had not been kept. His family could do nothing for him. His debts to Oxford tradesmen were small indeed, yet larger than he could pay. In the autumn of 1731, he was under the necessity of quitting the university without a degree. In the following winter his father died. The old man left but a pittance; and of that pittance almost the whole was appropriated to the support of his widow. The property to which Samuel succeeded amounted to no more than twenty pounds.

His life, during the thirty years which followed, was one hard struggle with poverty. The misery of that struggle needed no aggravation, but was aggravated by the sufferings of an unsound body and an unsound mind. Before the young man left the university, his hereditary malady had broken forth in a singularly cruel form. He had become an incurable hypochondriac. He said long after that he had been mad all his life, or at least not perfectly sane; and, in truth, eccentricities less strange than his have often been thought

grounds sufficient for absolving felons, and for setting aside wills. His grimaces, his gestures, his mutterings, sometimes diverted and sometimes terrified people who did not know him. At a dinner table he would, in a fit of absence, stoop down and twitch off a lady's shoe. He would amaze a drawing room by suddenly ejaculating a clause of the Lord's Prayer. He would conceive an unintelligible aversion to a particular alley, and perform a great circuit rather than see the hateful place. He would set his heart on touching every post in the streets through which he walked. If by any chance he missed a post, he would go back a hundred yards and repair the omission. Under the influence of his disease, his senses became morbidly torpid, and his imagination morbidly active. At one time he would stand poring on the town clock without being able to tell the hour. At another, he would distinctly hear his mother, who was many miles off, calling him by his name. But this was not the worst. A deep melancholy took possession of him, and gave a dark tinge to all his views of human nature and of human destiny. Such wretchedness as he endured has driven many men to shoot themselves or drown themselves. But he was under no temptation to commit suicide. He was sick of life; but he was afraid of death; and he shuddered at every sight or sound which reminded him of the inevitable hour. In religion he found but little comfort during his long and frequent fits of dejection; for his religion partook of his own character. The light from heaven shone on him indeed, but not in a direct line, or with its own pure splendour. The rays had to struggle through a disturbing medium: they reached him refracted, dulled and discoloured by the thick gloom which had settled on his soul; and, though they might be sufficiently clear to guide him, were too dim to cheer him.

With such infirmities of body and of mind, this celebrated

man was left, at two-and-twenty, to fight his way through the world. He remained during about five years in the midland counties. At Lichfield, his birth-place and his early home, he had inherited some friends and acquired others. He was kindly noticed by Henry Hervey, a gay officer of noble family, who happened to be quartered there. Gilbert Walmesley, registrar of the ecclesiastical court of the diocese, a man of distinguished parts, learning, and knowledge of the world, did himself honour by patronising the young adventurer, whose repulsive person, unpolished manners, and squalid garb, moved many of the petty aristocracy of the neighbourhood to laughter or to disgust. At Lichfield, however, Johnson could find no way of earning a livelihood. He became usher of a grammar school in Leicestershire; he resided as a humble companion in the house of a country gentleman; but a life of dependence was insupportable to his haughty spirit. He repaired to Birmingham, and there earned a few guineas by literary drudgery. In that town he printed a translation, little noticed at the time, and long forgotten, of a Latin book about Abyssinia. He then put forth proposals for publishing by subscription the poems of Politian, with notes containing a history of modern Latin verse; but subscriptions did not come in; and the volume never appeared.

While leading this vagrant and miserable life, Johnson fell in love. The object of his passion was Mrs. Elizabeth Porter, a widow who had children as old as himself. To ordinary spectators, the lady appeared to be a short, fat, coarse woman, painted half an inch thick, dressed in gaudy colours, and fond of exhibiting provincial airs and graces which were not exactly those of the Queensberrys and Lepels. To Johnson, however, whose passions were strong, whose eyesight was too weak to distinguish ceruse from natural

bloom, and who had seldom or never been in the same room with a woman of real fashion, his Titty, as he called her, was the most beautiful, graceful, and accomplished of her sex. That his admiration was unfeigned cannot be doubted; for she was as poor as himself. She accepted, with a readiness which did her little honour, the addresses of a suitor who might have been her son. The marriage, however, in spite of occasional wranglings, proved happier than might have been expected. The lover continued to be under the illusions of the wedding-day till the lady died in her sixty-fourth year. On her monument he placed an inscription extolling the charms of her person and of her manners; and when, long after her decease, he had occasion to mention her, he exclaimed, with a tenderness half ludicrous, half pathetic, "Pretty creature!"

His marriage made it necessary for him to exert himself more strenuously than he had hitherto done. He took a house in the neighbourhood of his native town, and advertised for pupils. But eighteen months passed away; and only three pupils came to his academy. Indeed, his appearance was so strange, and his temper so violent, that his schoolroom must have resembled an ogre's den. Nor was the tawdry painted grandmother whom he called his Titty well qualified to make provision for the comfort of young gentlemen. David Garrick, who was one of the pupils, used, many years later, to throw the best company of London into convulsions of laughter by mimicking the endearments of this extraordinary pair.

At length Johnson, in the twenty-eighth year of his age, determined to seek his fortune in the capital as a literary adventurer. He set out with a few guineas, three acts of the tragedy of Irene in manuscript, and two or three letters of introduction from his friend Walmesley.

Never since literature became a calling in England had it been a less gainful calling than at the time when Johnson took up his residence in London. In the preceding generation a writer of eminent merit was sure to be munificently rewarded by the government. The least that he could expect was a pension or a sinecure place; and, if he showed any aptitude for politics, he might hope to be a member of parliament, a lord of the treasury, an ambassador, a secretary of state. It would be easy, on the other hand, to name several writers of the nineteenth century of whom the least successful has received forty thousand pounds from the booksellers. But Johnson entered on his vocation in the most dreary part of the dreary interval which separated two ages of prosperity. Literature had ceased to flourish under the patronage of the great, and had not begun to flourish under the patronage of the public. One man of letters, indeed, Pope, had acquired by his pen what was then considered as a handsome fortune, and lived on a footing of equality with nobles and ministers of state. But this was a solitary exception. Even an author whose reputation was established, and whose works were popular, such an author as Thomson, whose Seasons were in every library, such an author as Fielding, whose Pasquin had had a greater run than any drama since The Beggar's Opera, was sometimes glad to obtain, by pawning his best coat, the means of dining on tripe at a cookshop underground, where he could wipe his hands, after his greasy meal, on the back of a Newfoundland dog. It is easy, therefore, to imagine what humiliations and privations must have awaited the novice who had still to earn a name. One of the publishers to whom Johnson applied for employment measured with a scornful eye that athletic though uncouth frame, and exclaimed, "You had better get a porter's knot, and carry trunks." Nor was the advice

bad, for a porter was likely to be as plentifully fed, and as comfortably lodged, as a poet.

Some time appears to have elapsed before Johnson was able to form any literary connection from which he could expect more than bread for the day which was passing over him. He never forgot the generosity with which Hervey, who was now residing in London, relieved his wants during this time of trial. "Harry Hervey," said the old philosopher many years later, "was a vicious man; but he was very kind to me. If you call a dog Hervey, I shall love him." At Hervey's table Johnson sometimes enjoyed feasts which were made more agreeable by contrast. But in general he dined, and thought that he dined well, on sixpenny worth of meat and a pennyworth of bread at an alehouse near Drury Lane.

The effect of the privations and sufferings which he endured at this time was discernible to the last in his temper and his deportment. His manners had never been courtly. They now became almost savage. Being frequently under the necessity of wearing shabby coats and dirty shirts, he became a confirmed sloven. Being often very hungry when he sate down to his meals, he contracted a habit of eating with ravenous greediness. Even to the end of his life, and even at the tables of the great, the sight of food affected him as it affects wild beasts and birds of prey. His taste in cookery, formed in subterranean ordinaries and *Alamode* beefshops, was far from delicate. Whenever he was so fortunate as to have near him a hare that had been kept too long, or a meat pie made with rancid butter, he gorged himself with such violence that his veins swelled, and the moisture broke out on his forehead. The affronts which his poverty emboldened stupid and low-minded men to offer to him would have broken a mean spirit into sycophancy, but

made him rude even to ferocity. Unhappily the insolence which, while it was defensive, was pardonable, and in some sense respectable, accompanied him into societies where he was treated with courtesy and kindness. He was repeatedly provoked into striking those who had taken liberties with him. All the sufferers, however, were wise enough to abstain from talking about their beatings, except Osborne, the most rapacious and brutal of booksellers, who proclaimed everywhere that he had been knocked down by the huge fellow whom he had hired to puff the Harleian Library.

About a year after Johnson had begun to reside in London, he was fortunate enough to obtain regular employment from Cave, an enterprising and intelligent bookseller, who was proprietor and editor of the Gentleman's Magazine. That journal, just entering on the ninth year of its long existence, was the only periodical work in the kingdom which then had what would now be called a large circulation. It was indeed, the chief source of parliamentary intelligence. It was not then safe, even during a recess, to publish an account of the proceedings of either House without some disguise. Cave, however, ventured to entertain his readers with what he called Reports of the Debates of the Senate of Lilliput. France was Blefuscu: London was Mildendo: pounds were sprugs: the Duke of Newcastle was the Nardac secretary of state: Lord Hardwicke was the Hurgo Hickrad; and William Pulteney was Wingul Pulnub. To write the speeches was, during several years, the business of Johnson. He was generally furnished with notes, meagre indeed, and inaccurate, of what had been said; but sometimes he had to find arguments and eloquence both for the ministry and for the opposition. He was himself a Tory, not from rational conviction — for his serious opinion was that one form of government was just as good or as bad as another — but from mere

passion, such as inflamed the Capulets against the Montagues, or the Blues of the Roman circus against the Greens. In his infancy he had heard so much talk about the villanies of the Whigs, and the dangers of the Church, that he had become a furious partisan when he could scarcely speak. Before he was three he had insisted on being taken to hear Sacheverell preach at Lichfield Cathedral, and had listened to the sermon with as much respect, and probably with as much intelligence, as any Staffordshire squire in the congregation. The work which had been begun in the nursery had been completed by the university. Oxford, when Johnson resided there, was the most Jacobitical place in England; and Pembroke was one of the most Jacobitical colleges in Oxford. The prejudices which he brought up to London were scarcely less absurd than those of his own Tom Tempest. Charles II. and James II. were two of the best kings that ever reigned. Laud, a poor creature who never did, said, or wrote any thing indicating more than the ordinary capacity of an old woman, was a prodigy of parts and learning over whose tomb Art and Genius still continued to weep. Hampden deserved no more honourable name than that of "the zealot of rebellion." Even the ship money, condemned not less decidedly by Falkland and Clarendon than by the bitterest Roundheads, Johnson would not pronounce to have been an unconstitutional impost. Under a government the mildest that had ever been known in the world, under a government which allowed to the people an unprecedented liberty of speech and action, he fancied that he was a slave; he assailed the ministry with obloquy which refuted itself, and regretted the lost freedom and happiness of those golden days in which a writer who had taken but one-tenth part of the license allowed to him would have been pilloried, mangled with the shears, whipped at the cart's tail, and flung into a noisome

dungeon to die. He hated dissenters and stock-jobbers, the excise and the army, septennial parliaments, and continental connections. He long had an aversion to the Scotch, an aversion of which he could not remember the commencement, but which, he owned, had probably originated in his abhorrence of the conduct of the nation during the Great Rebellion. It is easy to guess in what manner debates on great party questions were likely to be reported by a man whose judgment was so much disordered by party spirit. A show of fairness was indeed necessary to the prosperity of the Magazine. But Johnson long afterwards owned that, though he had saved appearances, he had taken care that the Whig dogs should not have the best of it; and, in fact, every passage which has lived, every passage which bears the marks of his higher faculties, is put into the mouth of some member of the opposition.

A few weeks after Johnson had entered on these obscure labours, he published a work which at once placed him high among the writers of his age. It is probable that what he had suffered during his first year in London had often reminded him of some parts of that noble poem in which Juvenal had described the misery and degradation of a needy man of letters, lodged among the pigeons' nests in the tottering garrets which overhung the streets of Rome. Pope's admirable imitations of Horace's Satires and Epistles had recently appeared, were in every hand, and were by many readers thought superior to the originals. What Pope had done for Horace, Johnson aspired to do for Juvenal. The enterprise was bold, and yet judicious. For between Johnson and Juvenal there was much in common, much more certainly than between Pope and Horace.

Johnson's London appeared without his name in May 1738. He received only ten guineas for this stately and

vigorous poem: but the sale was rapid, and the success complete. A second edition was required within a week. Those small critics who are always desirous to lower established reputation ran about proclaiming that the anonymous satirist was superior to Pope in Pope's own peculiar department of literature. It ought to be remembered, to the honour of Pope, that he joined heartily in the applause with which the appearance of a rival genius was welcomed. He made inquiries about the author of London. Such a man, he said, could not long be concealed. The name was soon discovered; and Pope, with great kindness, exerted himself to obtain an academical degree and the mastership of a grammar school for the poor young poet. The attempt failed, and Johnson remained a bookseller's hack.

It does not appear that these two men, the most eminent writer of the generation which was going out, and the most eminent writer of the generation which was coming in, ever saw each other. They lived in very different circles, one surrounded by dukes and earls, the other by starving pamphleteers and indexmakers. Among Johnson's associates at this time may be mentioned Boyse, who, when his shirts were pledged, scrawled Latin verses sitting up in bed with his arms through two holes in his blanket, who composed very respectable sacred poetry when he was sober, and who was at last run over by a hackney coach when he was drunk; Hoole, surnamed the metaphysical tailor, who, instead of attending to his measures, used to trace geometrical diagrams on the board where he sate cross-legged; and the penitent impostor, George Psalmanazar, who, after poring all day, in a humble lodging, on the folios of Jewish rabbis and Christian fathers, indulged himself at night with literary and theological conversation at an alehouse in the city. But the most remarkable of the persons with whom at this time John-

son consorted, was Richard Savage, an earl's son, a shoemaker's apprentice, who had seen life in all its forms, who had feasted among blue ribands in Saint James's Square, and had lain with fifty pounds weight of irons on his legs, in the condemned ward of Newgate. This man had, after many vicissitudes of fortune, sunk at last into abject and hopeless poverty. His pen had failed him. His patrons had been taken away by death, or estranged by the riotous profusion with which he squandered their bounty, and the ungrateful insolence with which he rejected their advice. He now lived by begging. He dined on venison and Champagne whenever he had been so fortunate as to borrow a guinea. If his questing had been unsuccessful, he appeased the rage of hunger with some scraps of broken meat, and lay down to rest under the Piazza of Covent Garden in warm weather, and, in cold weather, as near as he could get to the furnace of a glass house. Yet, in his misery, he was still an agreeable companion. He had an inexhaustible store of anecdotes about that gay and brilliant world from which he was now an outcast. He had observed the great men of both parties in hours of careless relaxation, had seen the leaders of opposition without the mask of patriotism, and had heard the prime minister roar with laughter and tell stories not over decent. During some months Savage lived in the closest familiarity with Johnson; and then the friends parted, not without tears. Johnson remained in London to drudge for Cave. Savage went to the West of England, lived there as he had lived everywhere, and, in 1743, died, penniless and heart-broken, in Bristol gaol.

Soon after his death, while the public curiosity was strongly excited about his extraordinary character, and his not less extraordinary adventures, a life of him appeared widely different from the catchpenny lives of eminent men

which were then a staple article of manufacture in Grub Street. The style was indeed deficient in ease and variety; and the writer was evidently too partial to the Latin element of our language. But the little work, with all its faults, was a masterpiece. No finer specimen of literary biography existed in any language, living or dead; and a discerning critic might have confidently predicted that the author was destined to be the founder of a new school of English eloquence.

The Life of Savage was anonymous; but it was well known in literary circles that Johnson was the writer. During the three years which followed, he produced no important work; but he was not, and indeed could not be, idle. The fame of his abilities and learning continued to grow. Warburton pronounced him a man of parts and genius; and the praise of Warburton was then no light thing. Such was Johnson's reputation that, in 1747, several eminent booksellers combined to employ him in the arduous work of preparing a Dictionary of the English Language, in two folio volumes. The sum which they agreed to pay him was only fifteen hundred guineas; and out of this sum he had to pay several poor men of letters who assisted him in the humbler parts of his task.

The Prospectus of the Dictionary he addressed to the Earl of Chesterfield. Chesterfield had long been celebrated for the politeness of his manners, the brilliancy of his wit, and the delicacy of his taste. He was acknowledged to be the finest speaker in the House of Lords. He had recently governed Ireland, at a momentous conjuncture, with eminent firmness, wisdom, and humanity; and he had since become Secretary of State. He received Johnson's homage with the most winning affability, and requited it with a few guineas, bestowed doubtless in a very graceful manner, but

was by no means desirous to see all his carpets blackened with the London mud, and his soups and wines thrown to right and left over the gowns of fine ladies and the waistcoats of fine gentlemen, by an absent, awkward scholar, who gave strange starts and uttered strange growls, who dressed like a scarecrow, and ate like a cormorant. During some time Johnson continued to call on his patron, but, after being repeatedly told by the porter that his lordship was not at home, took the hint, and ceased to present himself at the inhospitable door.

Johnson had flattered himself that he should have completed his Dictionary by the end of 1750; but it was not till 1755 that he at length gave his huge volumes to the world. During the seven years which he passed in the drudgery of penning definitions and marking quotations for transcription, he sought for relaxation in literary labour of a more agreeable kind. In 1749 he published the Vanity of Human Wishes, an excellent imitation of the Tenth Satire of Juvenal. It is in truth not easy to say whether the palm belongs to the ancient or to the modern poet. The couplets in which the fall of Wolsey is described, though lofty and sonorous, are feeble when compared with the wonderful lines which bring before us all Rome in tumult on the day of the fall of Sejanus, the laurels on the doorposts, the white bull stalking towards the Capitol, the statues rolling down from their pedestals, the flatterers of the disgraced minister running to see him dragged with a hook through the streets, and to have a kick at his carcase before it is hurled into the Tiber. It must be owned too that in the concluding passage the Christian moralist has not made the most of his advantages, and has fallen decidedly short of the sublimity of his Pagan model. On the other hand, Juvenal's Hannibal must yield to Johnson's Charles; and Johnson's vigorous and pathetic

enumeration of the miseries of a literary life must be allowed to be superior to Juvenal's lamentation over the fate of Demosthenes and Cicero.

For the copyright of the Vanity of Human Wishes Johnson received only fifteen guineas.

A few days after the publication of this poem, his tragedy, begun many years before, was brought on the stage. His pupil, David Garrick, had, in 1741, made his appearance on a humble stage in Goodman's Fields, had at once risen to the first place among actors, and was now, after several years of almost uninterrupted success, manager of Drury Lane Theatre. The relation between him and his old preceptor was of a very singular kind. They repelled each other strongly, and yet attracted each other strongly. Nature had made them of very different clay; and circumstances had fully brought out the natural peculiarities of both. Sudden prosperity had turned Garrick's head. Continued adversity had soured Johnson's temper. Johnson saw with more envy than became so great a man the villa, the plate, the china, the Brussels carpet, which the little mimic had got by repeating, with grimaces and gesticulations, what wiser men had written; and the exquisitely sensitive vanity of Garrick was galled by the thought that, while all the rest of the world was applauding him, he could obtain from one morose cynic, whose opinion it was impossible to despise, scarcely any compliment not acidulated with scorn. Yet the two Lichfield men had so many early recollections in common, and sympathized with each other on so many points on which they sympathized with nobody else in the vast population of the capital, that, though the master was often provoked by the monkey-like impertinence of the pupil, and the pupil by the bearish rudeness of the master, they remained friends till they were parted by

death. Garrick now brought Irene out, with alterations sufficient to displease the author, yet not sufficient to make the piece pleasing to the audience. The public, however, listened, with little emotion, but with much civility, to five acts of monotonous declamation. After nine representations the play was withdrawn. It is, indeed, altogether unsuited to the stage, and, even when perused in the closet, will be found hardly worthy of the author. He had not the slightest notion of what blank verse should be. A change in the last syllable of every other line would make the versification of the Vanity of Human Wishes closely resemble the versification of Irene. The poet, however, cleared, by his benefit nights, and by the sale of the copyright of his tragedy, about three hundred pounds, then a great sum in his estimation.

About a year after the representation of Irene, he began to publish a series of short essays on morals, manners, and literature. This species of composition had been brought into fashion by the success of the Tatler, and by the still more brilliant success of the Spectator. A crowd of small writers had vainly attempted to rival Addison. The Lay Monastery, the Censor, the Freethinker, the Plain Dealer, the Champion, and other works of the same kind, had had their short day. None of them had obtained a permanent place in our literature; and they are now to be found only in the libraries of the curious. At length Johnson undertook the adventure in which so many aspirants had failed. In the thirty-sixth year after the appearance of the last number of the Spectator appeared the first number of the Rambler. From March 1750 to March 1752, this paper continued to come out every Tuesday and Saturday.

From the first the Rambler was enthusiastically admired by a few eminent men. Richardson, when only five num-

bers had appeared, pronounced it equal, if not superior to the Spectator. Young and Hartley expressed their approbation not less warmly. Bubb Dodington, among whose many faults indifference to the claims of genius and learning cannot be reckoned, solicited the acquaintance of the writer. In consequence probably of the good offices of Dodington, who was then the confidential adviser of Prince Frederic, two of his Royal Highness's gentlemen carried a gracious message to the printing office, and ordered seven copies for Leicester House. But these overtures seem to have been very coldly received. Johnson had had enough of the patronage of the great to last him all his life, and was not disposed to haunt any other door as he had haunted the door of Chesterfield.

By the public the Rambler was at first very coldly received. Though the price of a number was only twopence, the sale did not amount to five hundred. The profits were therefore very small. But as soon as the flying leaves were collected and reprinted they became popular. The author lived to see thirteen thousand copies spread over England alone. Separate editions were published for the Scotch and Irish markets. A large party pronounced the style perfect, so absolutely perfect that in some essays it would be impossible for the writer himself to alter a single word for the better. Another party, not less numerous, vehemently accused him of having corrupted the purity of the English tongue. The best critics admitted that his diction was too monotonous, too obviously artificial, and now and then turgid even to absurdity. But they did justice to the acuteness of his observations on morals and manners, to the constant precision and frequent brilliancy of his language, to the weighty and magnificent eloquence of many serious passages, and to the solemn yet pleasing humour of some of the lighter

papers. On the question of precedence between Addison and Johnson, a question which, seventy years ago, was much disputed, posterity has pronounced a decision from which there is no appeal. Sir Roger, his chaplain and his butler, Will Wimble and Will Honeycomb, the Vision of Mirza, the Journal of the Retired Citizen, the Everlasting Club, the Dunmow Flitch, the Loves of Hilpah and Shalum, the Visit to the Exchange, and the Visit to the Abbey, are known to everybody. But many men and women, even of highly cultivated minds, are unacquainted with Squire Bluster and Mrs. Busy, Quisquilius and Venustulus, the Allegory of Wit and Learning, the Chronicle of the Revolutions of a Garret, and the sad fate of Aningait and Ajut.

The last Rambler was written in a sad and gloomy hour. Mrs. Johnson had been given over by the physicians. Three days later she died. She left her husband almost broken-hearted. Many people had been surprised to see a man of his genius and learning stooping to every drudgery, and denying himself almost every comfort, for the purpose of supplying a silly, affected old woman with superfluities, which she accepted with but little gratitude. But all his affection had been concentrated on her. He had neither brother nor sister, neither son nor daughter. To him she was beautiful as the Gunnings, and witty as Lady Mary. Her opinion of his writings was more important to him than the voice of the pit of Drury Lane Theatre, or the judgment of the Monthly Review. The chief support which had sustained him through the most arduous labour of his life was the hope that she would enjoy the fame and the profit which he anticipated from his Dictionary. She was gone; and, in that vast labyrinth of streets, peopled by eight hundred thousand human beings, he was alone. Yet it was necessary

for him to set himself, as he expressed it, doggedly to work. After three more laborious years, the Dictionary was at length complete.

It had been generally supposed that this great work would be dedicated to the eloquent and accomplished nobleman to whom the Prospectus had been addressed. He well knew the value of such a compliment; and therefore, when the day of publication drew near, he exerted himself to sooth, by a show of zealous and at the same time of delicate and judicious kindness, the pride which he had so cruelly wounded. Since the Ramblers had ceased to appear, the town had been entertained by a journal called The World, to which many men of high rank and fashion contributed. In two successive numbers of the World, the Dictionary was, to use the modern phrase, puffed with wonderful skill. The writings of Johnson were warmly praised. It was proposed that he should be invested with the authority of a Dictator, nay, of a Pope, over our language, and that his decisions about the meaning and the spelling of words should be received as final. His two folios, it was said, would of course be bought by everybody who could afford to buy them. It was soon known that these papers were written by Chesterfield. But the just resentment of Johnson was not to be so appeased. In a letter written with singular energy and dignity of thought and language, he repelled the tardy advances of his patron. The Dictionary came forth without a dedication. In the preface the author truly declared that he owed nothing to the great, and described the difficulties with which he had been left to struggle so forcibly and pathetically that the ablest and most malevolent of all the enemies of his fame, Horne Tooke, never could read that passage without tears.

The public, on this occasion, did Johnson full justice, and something more than justice. The best lexicographer may

well be content if his productions are received by the world with cold esteem. But Johnson's Dictionary was hailed with an enthusiasm such as no similar work has ever excited. It was indeed the first dictionary which could be read with pleasure. The definitions show so much acuteness of thought and command of language, and the passages quoted from poets, divines, and philosophers, are so skilfully selected that a leisure hour may always be very agreeably spent in turning over the pages. The faults of the book resolve themselves, for the most part, into one great fault. Johnson was a wretched etymologist. He knew little or nothing of any Teutonic language except English, which indeed, as he wrote it, was scarcely a Teutonic language; and thus he was absolutely at the mercy of Junius and Skinner.

The Dictionary, though it raised Johnson's fame, added nothing to his pecuniary means. The fifteen hundred guineas which the booksellers had agreed to pay him had been advanced and spent before the last sheets issued from the press. It is painful to relate that, twice in the course of the year which followed the publication of this great work, he was arrested and carried to spunging-houses, and that he was twice indebted for his liberty to his excellent friend Richardson. It was still necessary for the man who had been formally saluted by the highest authority as Dictator of the English language to supply his wants by constant toil. He abridged his Dictionary. He proposed to bring out an edition of Shakspeare by subscription; and many subscribers sent in their names, and laid down their money; but he soon found the task so little to his taste that he turned to more attractive employments. He contributed many papers to a new monthly journal, which was called the Literary Magazine. Few of these papers have much interest; but among them was the

very best thing that he ever wrote, a masterpiece both of reasoning and of satirical pleasantry, the review of Jenyns's Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil.

In the spring of 1758 Johnson put forth the first of a series of essays, entitled The Idler. During two years these essays continued to appear weekly. They were eagerly read, widely circulated, and, indeed, impudently pirated while they were still in the original form, and had a large sale when collected into volumes. The Idler may be described as a second part of the Rambler, somewhat livelier and somewhat weaker than the first part.

While Johnson was busied with his Idlers, his mother, who had accomplished her ninetieth year, died at Lichfield. It was long since he had seen her: but he had not failed to contribute largely, out of his small means, to her comfort. In order to defray the charges of her funeral, and to pay some debts which she had left, he wrote a little book in a single week, and sent off the sheets to the press without reading them over. A hundred pounds were paid him for the copyright; and the purchasers had great cause to be pleased with their bargain; for the book was Rasselas.

The success of Rasselas was great, though such ladies as Miss Lydia Languish must have been grievously disappointed when they found that the new volume from the circulating library was little more than a dissertation on the author's favourite theme, the Vanity of Human Wishes; that the Prince of Abyssinia was without a mistress, and the Princess without a lover; and that the story set the hero and the heroine down exactly where it had taken them up. The style was the subject of much eager controversy. The Monthly Review and the Critical Review took different sides. Many readers pronounced the writer a pompous pedant, who would never use a word of two syllables where

it was possible to use a word of six, and who could not make a waiting woman relate her adventures without balancing every noun with another noun, and every epithet with another epithet. Another party, not less zealous, cited with delight numerous passages in which weighty meaning was expressed with accuracy and illustrated with splendour. And both the censure and the praise were merited.

About the plan of Rasselas little was said by the critics; and yet the faults of the plan might seem to invite severe criticism. Johnson has frequently blamed Shakspeare for neglecting the proprieties of time and place, and for ascribing to one age or nation the manners and opinions of another. Yet Shakspeare has not sinned in this way more grievously than Johnson. Rasselas and Imlac, Nekayah and Pekuah, are evidently meant to be Abyssinians of the eighteenth century: for the Europe which Imlac describes is the Europe of the eighteenth century; and the inmates of the Happy Valley talk familiarly of that law of gravitation which Newton discovered, and which was not fully received even at Cambridge till the eighteenth century. What a real company of Abyssinians would have been may be learned from Bruce's Travels. But Johnson, not content with turning filthy savages, ignorant of their letters, and gorged with raw steaks cut from living cows, into philosophers as eloquent and enlightened as himself or his friend Burke, and into ladies as highly accomplished as Mrs. Lennox or Mrs. Sheridan, transferred the whole domestic system of England to Egypt. Into a land of harems, a land of polygamy, a land where women are married without ever being seen, he introduced the flirtations and jealousies of our ball-rooms. In a land where there is boundless liberty of divorce, wedlock is described as the indissoluble compact. "A youth and maiden meeting by chance, or brought together by arti-

fice, exchange glances, reciprocate civilities, go home, and dream of each other. Such," says Rasselas, "is the common process of marriage." Such it may have been, and may still be, in London, but assuredly not at Cairo. A writer who was guilty of such improprieties had little right to blame the poet who made Hector quote Aristotle, and represented Julio Romano as flourishing in the days of the oracle of Delphi.

By such exertions as have been described, Johnson supported himself till the year 1762. In that year a great change in his circumstances took place. He had from a child been an enemy of the reigning dynasty. His Jacobite prejudices had been exhibited with little disguise both in his works and in his conversation. Even in his massy and elaborate Dictionary, he had, with a strange want of taste and judgment, inserted bitter and contumelious reflections on the Whig party. The excise, which was a favourite resource of Whig financiers, he had designated as a hateful tax. He had railed against the commissioners of excise in language so coarse that they had seriously thought of prosecuting him. He had with difficulty been prevented from holding up the Lord Privy Seal by name as an example of the meaning of the word "renegade." A pension he had defined as pay given to a state hireling to betray his country; a pensioner as a slave of state hired by a stipend to obey a master. It seemed unlikely that the author of these definitions would himself be pensioned. But that was a time of wonders. George the Third had ascended the throne; and had, in the course of a few months, disgusted many of the old friends, and conciliated many of the old enemies of his house. The city was becoming mutinous. Oxford was becoming loyal. Cavendishes and Bentincks were murmuring. Somersets and Wyndhams were hastening to kiss hands. The head

of the treasury was now Lord Bute, who was a Tory, and could have no objection to Johnson's Toryism. Bute wished to be thought a patron of men of letters; and Johnson was one of the most eminent and one of the most needy men of letters in Europe. A pension of three hundred a year was graciously offered, and with very little hesitation accepted.

This event produced a change in Johnson's whole way of life. For the first time since his boyhood he no longer felt the daily goad urging him to the daily toil. He was at liberty, after thirty years of anxiety and drudgery, to indulge his constitutional indolence, to lie in bed till two in the afternoon, and to sit up talking till four in the morning, without fearing either the printer's devil or the sheriff's officer.

One laborious task indeed he had bound himself to perform. He had received large subscriptions for his promised edition of Shakspeare; he had lived on those subscriptions during some years; and he could not without disgrace omit to perform his part of the contract. His friends repeatedly exhorted him to make an effort; and he repeatedly resolved to do so. But, notwithstanding their exhortations and his resolutions, month followed month, year followed year, and nothing was done. He prayed fervently against his idleness; he determined, as often as he received the sacrament, that he would no longer doze away and trifle away his time; but the spell under which he lay resisted prayer and sacrament. His private notes at this time are made up of self-reproaches. "My indolence," he wrote on Easter eve in 1764, "has sunk into grosser sluggishness. A kind of strange oblivion has overspread me, so that I know not what has become of the last year." Easter 1765 came, and found him still in the same state. "My time," he wrote, "has been

unprofitably spent, and seems as a dream that has left nothing behind. My memory grows confused, and I know not how the days pass over me." Happily for his honour, the charm which held him captive was at length broken by no gentle or friendly hand. He had been weak enough to pay serious attention to a story about a ghost which haunted a house in Cock Lane, and had actually gone himself, with some of his friends, at one in the morning, to St. John's Church Clerkenwell, in the hope of receiving a communication from the perturbed spirit. But the spirit, though adjured with all solemnity, remained obstinately silent; and it soon appeared that a naughty girl of eleven had been amusing herself by making fools of so many philosophers. Churchill, who, confident in his powers, drunk with popularity, and burning with party spirit, was looking for some man of established fame and Tory politics to insult, celebrated the Cock Lane Ghost in three cantos, nicknamed Johnson Pomposo, asked where the book was which had been so long promised and so liberally paid for, and directly accused the great moralist of cheating. This terrible word proved effectual; and in October 1765 appeared, after a delay of nine years, the new edition of Shakspeare.

This publication saved Johnson's character for honesty, but added nothing to the fame of his abilities and learning. The preface, though it contains some good passages, is not in his best manner. The most valuable notes are those in which he had an opportunity of showing how attentively he had during many years observed human life and human nature. The best specimen is the note on the character of Polonius. Nothing so good is to be found even in Wilhelm Meister's admirable examination of Hamlet. But here praise must end. It would be difficult to name a more slovenly, a more worthless edition of any great classic. The reader may

turn over play after play without finding one happy conjectural emendation, or one ingenious and satisfactory explanation of a passage which had baffled preceding commentators. Johnson had, in his Prospectus, told the world that he was peculiarly fitted for the task which he had undertaken, because he had, as a lexicographer, been under the necessity of taking a wider view of the English language than any of his predecessors. That his knowledge of our literature was extensive is indisputable. But, unfortunately, he had altogether neglected that very part of our literature with which it is especially desirable that an editor of Shakspeare should be conversant. It is dangerous to assert a negative. Yet little will be risked by the assertion, that in the two folio volumes of the English Dictionary there is not a single passage quoted from any dramatist of the Elizabethan age, except Shakspeare and Ben. Even from Ben the quotations are few. Johnson might easily, in a few months, have made himself well acquainted with every old play that was extant. But it never seems to have occurred to him that this was a necessary preparation for the work which he had undertaken. He would doubtless have admitted that it would be the height of absurdity in a man who was not familiar with the works of Æschylus and Euripides to publish an edition of Sophocles. Yet he ventured to publish an edition of Shakspeare, without having ever in his life, as far as can be discovered, read a single scene of Massinger, Ford, Decker, Webster, Marlow, Beaumont, or Fletcher. His detractors were noisy and scurrilous. Those who most loved and honoured him had little to say in praise of the manner in which he had discharged the duty of a commentator. He had, however, acquitted himself of a debt which had long lain heavy on his conscience, and he sank back into the repose from which the sting of satire had roused him. He long continued to live

upon the fame which he had already won. He was honoured by the University of Oxford with a Doctor's degree, by the Royal Academy with a professorship, and by the King with an interview, in which his Majesty most graciously expressed a hope that so excellent a writer would not cease to write. In the interval, however, between 1765 and 1775 Johnson published only two or three political tracts, the longest of which he could have produced in forty-eight hours, if he had worked as he worked on the Life of Savage and on Rasselas.

But, though his pen was now idle, his tongue was active. The influence exercised by his conversation, directly upon those with whom he lived, and directly on the whole literary world, was altogether without a parallel. His colloquial talents were indeed of the highest order. He had strong sense, quick discernment, wit, humour, immense knowledge of literature and of life, and an infinite store of curious anecdotes. As respected style, he spoke far better than he wrote. Every sentence which dropped from his lips was as correct in structure as the most nicely balanced period of the Rambler. But in his talk there were no pompous triads, and little more than a fair proportion of words in *osity* and *ation*. All was simplicity, ease, and vigour. He uttered his short, weighty, and pointed sentences with a power of voice, and a justness and energy of emphasis, of which the effect was rather increased than diminished by the rollings of his huge form, and by the asthmatic gaspings and puffings in which the peals of his eloquence generally ended. Nor did the laziness which made him unwilling to sit down to his desk prevent him from giving instruction or entertainment orally. To discuss questions of taste, of learning, of casuistry, in language so exact and so forcible that it might have been printed without the alteration of a word, was to him no exertion, but a pleasure. He loved, as he said, to fold his legs

and have his talk out. He was ready to bestow the overflowings of his full mind on anybody who would start a subject, on a fellow-passenger in a stage coach, or on the person who sate at the same table with him in an eating-house. But his conversation was nowhere so brilliant and striking as when he was surrounded by a few friends, whose abilities and knowledge enabled them, as he once expressed it, to send him back every ball that he threw. Some of these, in 1764, formed themselves into a club, which gradually became a formidable power in the commonwealth of letters. The verdicts pronounced by this conclave on new books were speedily known over all London, and were sufficient to sell off a whole edition in a day, or to condemn the sheets to the service of the trunk-maker and the pastrycook. Nor shall we think this strange when we consider what great and various talents and acquirements met in the little fraternity. Goldsmith was the representative of poetry and light literature, Reynolds of the arts, Burke of political eloquence and political philosophy. There, too, were Gibbon, the greatest historian, and Jones the greatest linguist, of the age. Garrick brought to the meetings his inexhaustible pleasantry, his incomparable mimicry, and his consummate knowledge of stage effect. Among the most constant attendants were two high-born and high-bred gentlemen, closely bound together by friendship, but of widely different characters and habits; Bennet Langton, distinguished by his skill in Greek literature, by the orthodoxy of his opinions, and by the sanctity of his life; and Topham Beauclerk, renowned for his amours, his knowledge of the gay world, his fastidious taste, and his sarcastic wit. To predominate over such a society was not easy. Yet even over such a society Johnson predominated. Burke might indeed have disputed the supremacy to which others were under the necessity of submitting. But Burke, though not generally a

very patient listener, was content to take the second part when Johnson was present; and the club itself, consisting of so many eminent men, is to this day popularly designated as Johnson's club.

Among the members of this celebrated body was one to whom it has owed the greater part of its celebrity, yet who was regarded with little respect by his brethren, and had not without difficulty obtained a seat among them. This was James Boswell, a young Scotch lawyer, heir to an honourable name and a fair estate. That he was a coxcomb and a bore, weak, vain, pushing, curious, garrulous, was obvious to all who were acquainted with him. That he could not reason, that he had no wit, no humour, no eloquence, is apparent from his writings. And yet his writings are read beyond the Mississippi, and under the Southern Cross, and are likely to be read as long as the English exist, either as a living or as a dead language. Nature had made him a slave and an idolater. His mind resembled those creepers which the botanists call parasites, and which can subsist only by clinging round the stems and imbibing the juices of stronger plants. He must have fastened himself on somebody. He might have fastened himself on Wilkes, and have become the fiercest patriot in the Bill of Rights Society. He might have fastened himself on Whitfield, and have become the loudest field preacher among the Calvinistic Methodists. In a happy hour he fastened himself on Johnson. The pair might seem ill matched. For Johnson had early been prejudiced against Boswell's country. To a man of Johnson's strong understanding and irritable temper, the silly egotism and adulation of Boswell must have been as teasing as the constant buzz of a fly. Johnson hated to be questioned; and Boswell was eternally catechizing him on all kinds of subjects, and sometimes propounded such questions as, "What would you do,

sir, if you were locked up in a tower with a baby?" Johnson was a water drinker and Boswell was a winebibber, and indeed little better than a habitual sot. It was impossible that there should be perfect harmony between two such companions. Indeed, the great man was sometimes provoked into fits of passion, in which he said things which the small man, during a few hours, seriously resented. Every quarrel, however, was soon made up. During twenty years the disciple continued to worship the master: the master continued to scold the disciple, to sneer at him, and to love him. The two friends ordinarily resided at a great distance from each other. Boswell practised in the Parliament House of Edinburgh, and could pay only occasional visits to London. During those visits his chief business was to watch Johnson, to discover all Johnson's habits, to turn the conversation to subjects about which Johnson was likely to say something remarkable, and to fill quarto notebooks with minutes of what Johnson had said. In this way were gathered the materials, out of which was afterwards constructed the most interesting biographical work in the world.

Soon after the club began to exist, Johnson formed a connection less important indeed to his fame, but much more important to his happiness, than his connection with Boswell. Henry Thrale, one of the most opulent brewers in the kingdom, a man of sound and cultivated understanding, rigid principles, and liberal spirit, was married to one of those clever, kind-hearted, engaging, vain, pert, young women, who are perpetually doing or saying what is not exactly right, but who, do or say what they may, are always agreeable. In 1765 the Thrales became acquainted with Johnson, and the acquaintance ripened fast into friendship. They were astonished and delighted by the brilliancy of his conversation. They were flattered by finding that a man so widely

celebrated preferred their house to any other in London. Even the peculiarities which seemed to unfit him for civilised society, his gesticulations, his rollings, his puffings, his mutterings, the strange way in which he put on his clothes, the ravenous eagerness with which he devoured his dinner, his fits of melancholy, his fits of anger, his frequent rudeness, his occasional ferocity, increased the interest which his new associates took in him. For these things were the cruel marks left behind by a life which had been one long conflict with disease and with adversity. In a vulgar hack writer, such oddities would have excited only disgust. But in a man of genius, learning, and virtue, their effect was to add pity to admiration and esteem. Johnson soon had an apartment at the brewery in Southwark, and a still more pleasant apartment at the villa of his friends on Streatham Common. A large part of every year he passed in those abodes, abodes which must have seemed magnificent and luxurious indeed, when compared with the dens in which he had generally been lodged. But his chief pleasures were derived from what the astronomer of his Abyssinian tale called "the endearing elegance of female friendship." Mrs. Thrale rallied him, soothed him, coaxed him, and, if she sometimes provoked him by her flippancy, made ample amends by listening to his reproofs with angelic sweetness of temper. When he was diseased in body and in mind, she was the most tender of nurses. No comfort that wealth could purchase, no contrivance that womanly ingenuity, set to work by womanly compassion, could devise was wanting to his sick room. He requited her kindness by an affection pure as the affection of a father, yet delicately tinged with a gallantry, which, though awkward, must have been more flattering than the attentions of a crowd of the fools who gloried in the names, now obsolete, of Buck and Maccaroni. It should seem that a full half of

Johnson's life, during about sixteen years, was passed under the roof of the Thrales. He accompanied the family sometimes to Bath, and sometimes to Brighton; once to Wales and once to Paris. But he had at the same time a house in one of the narrow and gloomy courts on the north of Fleet Street. In the garrets was his library, a large and miscellaneous collection of books, falling to pieces and begrimed with dust. On a lower floor he sometimes, but very rarely, regaled a friend with a plain dinner, a veal pie, or a leg of lamb and spinage, and a rice pudding. Nor was the dwelling uninhabited during his long absences. It was the home of the most extraordinary assemblage of inmates that ever was brought together. At the head of the establishment Johnson had placed an old lady named Williams, whose chief recommendations were her blindness and her poverty. But, in spite of her murmurs and reproaches, he gave an asylum to another lady who was as poor as herself, Mrs. Desmoulins, whose family he had known many years before in Staffordshire. Room was found for the daughter of Mrs. Desmoulins, and for another destitute damsel, who was generally addressed as Miss Carmichael, but whom her generous host called Polly. An old quack doctor named Levett, who bled and dosed coal-heavers and hackney coachmen, and received for fees crusts of bread, bits of bacon, glasses of gin, and sometimes a little copper, completed this strange menagerie. All these poor creatures were at constant war with each other, and with Johnson's negro servant Frank. Sometimes, indeed, they transferred their hostilities from the servant to the master, complained that a better table was not kept for them, and railed or maundered till their benefactor was glad to make his escape to Streatham, or to the Mitre Tavern. And yet he, who was generally the haughtiest and most irritable of mankind, who was but too prompt to resent anything which

looked like a slight on the part of a purse-proud bookseller, or of a noble and powerful patron, bore patiently from mendicants, who, but for his bounty, must have gone to the workhouse, insults more provoking than those for which he had knocked down Osborne and bidden defiance to Chesterfield. Year after year Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Desmoulins, Polly and Levett, continued to torment him and to live upon him.

The course of life which has been described was interrupted in Johnson's sixty-fourth year by an important event. He had early read an account of the Hebrides, and had been much interested by learning that there was so near him a land peopled by a race which was still as rude and simple as in the middle ages. A wish to become intimately acquainted with a state of society so utterly unlike all that he had ever seen frequently crossed his mind. But it is not probable that his curiosity would have overcome his habitual sluggishness, and his love of the smoke, the mud, and the cries of London, had not Boswell importuned him to attempt the adventure, and offered to be his squire. At length, in August 1773, Johnson crossed the Highland line, and plunged courageously into what was then considered, by most Englishmen, as a dreary and perilous wilderness. After wandering about two months through the Celtic region, sometimes in rude boats which did not protect him from the rain, and sometimes on small shaggy poneys which could hardly bear his weight, he returned to his old haunts with a mind full of new images and new theories. During the following year he employed himself in recording his adventures. About the beginning of 1775, his Journey to the Hebrides was published, and was, during some weeks, the chief subject of conversation in all circles in which any attention was paid to literature. The book is still read with pleasure. The narrative is enter-

taining; the speculations, whether sound or unsound, are always ingenious; and the style, though too stiff and pompous, is somewhat easier and more graceful than that of his early writings. His prejudice against the Scotch had at length become little more than matter of jest; and whatever remained of the old feeling had been effectually removed by the kind and respectful hospitality with which he had been received in every part of Scotland. It was, of course, not to be expected that an Oxonian Tory should praise the Presbyterian polity and ritual, or that an eye accustomed to the hedgerows and parks of England should not be struck by the bareness of Berwickshire and East Lothian. But even in censure Johnson's tone is not unfriendly. The most enlightened Scotchmen, with Lord Mansfield at their head, were well pleased. But some foolish and ignorant Scotchmen were moved to anger by a little unpalatable truth which was mingled with much eulogy, and assailed him whom they chose to consider as the enemy of their country with libels much more dishonorable to their country than anything that he had ever said or written. They published paragraphs in the newspapers, articles in the magazines, six-penny pamphlets, five shilling books. One scribbler abused Johnson for being blear-eyed; another for being a pensioner: a third informed the world that one of the Doctor's uncles had been convicted of felony in Scotland, and had found that there was in that country one tree capable of supporting the weight of an Englishman. Macpherson, whose Fingal had been proved in the Journey to be an impudent forgery, threatened to take vengeance with a cane. The only effect of this threat was that Johnson reiterated the charge of forgery in the most contemptuous terms, and walked about, during some time, with a cudgel, which, if the impostor had not been too wise to encounter it, would assuredly have descended upon him, to borrow the sublime

language of his own epic poem, "like a hammer on the red son of the furnace."

Of other assailants Johnson took no notice whatever. He had early resolved never to be drawn into controversy; and he adhered to his resolution with a steadfastness which is the more extraordinary, because he was, both intellectually and morally, of the stuff of which controversialists are made. In conversation, he was a singularly eager, acute, and pertinacious disputant. When at a loss for good reasons, he had recourse to sophistry; and when heated by altercation, he made unsparing use of sarcasm and invective. But when he took his pen in his hand, his whole character seemed to be changed. A hundred bad writers misrepresented him and reviled him; but not one of the hundred could boast of having been thought by him worthy of a refutation, or even of a retort. The Kenricks, Campbells, MacNicols, and Hendersons, did their best to annoy him, in the hope that he would give them importance by answering them. But the reader will in vain search his works for any allusion to Kenrick or Campbell, to MacNicol or Henderson. One Scotchman, bent on vindicating the fame of Scotch learning, defied him to the combat in a detestable Latin hexameter.

"Maxime, si tu vis, cupio contendere tecum."

But Johnson took no notice of the challenge. He had learned, both from his own observation and from literary history, in which he was deeply read, that the place of books in the public estimation is fixed, not by what is written about them, but by what is written in them; and that an author whose works are likely to live is very unwise if he stoops to wrangle with detractors whose works are certain to die. He always maintained that fame was a shuttlecock which could be kept

up only by being beaten back, as well as beaten forward, and which would soon fall if there were only one battledore. No saying was oftener in his mouth than that fine apophthegm of Bentley, that no man was ever written down but by himself.

Unhappily, a few months after the appearance of the Journey to the Hebrides, Johnson did what none of his envious assailants could have done, and to a certain extent succeeded in writing himself down. The disputes between England and her American colonies had reached a point at which no amicable adjustment was possible. Civil war was evidently impending; and the ministers seem to have thought that the eloquence of Johnson might with advantage be employed to inflame the nation against the opposition here, and against the rebels beyond the Atlantic. He had already written two or three tracts in defence of the foreign and domestic policy of the government; and those tracts, though hardly worthy of him, were much superior to the crowd of pamphlets which lay on the counters of Almon and Stockdale. But his Taxation No Tyranny was a pitiable failure. The very title was a silly phrase, which can have been recommended to his choice by nothing but a jingling alliteration which he ought to have despised. The arguments were such as boys use in debating societies. The pleasantry was as awkward as the gambols of a hippopotamus. Even Boswell was forced to own that, in this unfortunate piece, he could detect no trace of his master's powers. The general opinion was that the strong faculties which had produced the Dictionary and the Rambler were beginning to feel the effect of time and of disease, and that the old man would best consult his credit by writing no more.

But this was a great mistake. Johnson had failed, not because his mind was less vigorous than when he wrote Rasselas in the evenings of a week, but because he had foolishly chosen, or suffered others to choose for him, a subject such

as he would at no time have been competent to treat. He was in no sense a statesman. He never willingly read or thought or talked about affairs of state. He loved biography, literary history, the history of manners; but political history was positively distasteful to him. The question at issue between the colonies and the mother country was a question about which he had really nothing to say. He failed, therefore, as the greatest men must fail when they attempt to do that for which they are unfit; as Burke would have failed if Burke had tried to write comedies like those of Sheridan; as Reynolds would have failed if Reynolds had tried to paint landscapes like those of Wilson. Happily, Johnson soon had an opportunity of proving most signally that his failure was not to be ascribed to intellectual decay.

On Easter eve 1777, some persons, deputed by a meeting which consisted of forty of the first booksellers in London, called upon him. Though he had some scruples about doing business at that season, he received his visitors with much civility. They came to inform him that a new edition of the English poets, from Cowley downwards, was in contemplation, and to ask him to furnish short biographical prefaces. He readily undertook the task, a task for which he was pre-eminently qualified. His knowledge of the literary history of England since the Restoration was unrivalled. That knowledge he had derived partly from books, and partly from sources which had long been closed; from old Grub Street traditions; from the talk of forgotten poetasters and pamphleteers who had long been lying in parish vaults; from the recollections of such men as Gilbert Walmesley, who had conversed with the wits of Button; Cibber, who had mutilated the plays of two generations of dramatists; Orrery, who had been admitted to the society of Swift; and Savage, who had rendered services of no very honourable kind to Pope. The

biographer therefore sate down to his task with a mind full of matter. He had at first intended to give only a paragraph to every minor poet, and only four or five pages to the greatest name. But the flood of anecdote and criticism overflowed the narrow channel. The work, which was originally meant to consist only of a few sheets, swelled into ten volumes, small volumes, it is true, and not closely printed. The first four appeared in 1779, the remaining six in 1781.

The Lives of the Poets are, on the whole, the best of Johnson's works. The narratives are as entertaining as any novel. The remarks on life and on human nature are eminently shrewd and profound. The criticisms are often excellent, and, even when grossly and provokingly unjust, well deserve to be studied. For, however erroneous they may be, they are never silly. They are the judgments of a mind trammelled by prejudice and deficient in sensibility, but vigorous and acute. They therefore generally contain a portion of valuable truth which deserves to be separated from the alloy; and, at the very worst, they mean something, a praise to which much of what is called criticism in our time has no pretensions.

Savage's Life Johnson reprinted nearly as it had appeared in 1744. Whoever, after reading that life, will turn to the other lives will be struck by the difference of style. Since Johnson had been at ease in his circumstances he had written little and had talked much. When, therefore, he, after the lapse of years, resumed his pen, the mannerism which he had contracted while he was in the constant habit of elaborate composition was less perceptible than formerly; and his diction frequently had a colloquial ease which it had formerly wanted. The improvement may be discerned by a skilful critic in the Journey to the Hebrides, and in the

Lives of the Poets is so obvious that it cannot escape the notice of the most careless reader.

Among the Lives the best are perhaps those of Cowley, Dryden, and Pope. The very worst is, beyond all doubt, that of Gray.

This great work at once became popular. There was, indeed, much just and much unjust censure: but even those who were loudest in blame were attracted by the book in spite of themselves. Malone computed the gains of the publishers at five or six thousand pounds. But the writer was very poorly remunerated. Intending at first to write very short prefaces, he had stipulated for only two hundred guineas. The booksellers, when they saw how far his performance had surpassed his promise, added only another hundred. Indeed, Johnson, though he did not despise, or affect to despise money, and though his strong sense and long experience ought to have qualified him to protect his own interests, seems to have been singularly unskilful and unlucky in his literary bargains. He was generally reputed the first English writer of his time. Yet several writers of his time sold their copyrights for sums such as he never ventured to ask. To give a single instance, Robertson received four thousand five hundred pounds for the History of Charles V.; and it is no disrespect to the memory of Robertson to say that the History of Charles V. is both a less valuable and a less amusing book than the Lives of the Poets.

Johnson was now in his seventy-second year. The infirmities of age were coming fast upon him. That inevitable event of which he never thought without horror was brought near to him; and his whole life was darkened by the shadow of death. He had often to pay the cruel price of longevity. Every year he lost what could never be replaced. The strange dependants to whom he had given shelter, and to whom, in

spite of their faults, he was strongly attached by habit, dropped off one by one; and, in the silence of his home, he regretted even the noise of their scolding matches. The kind and generous Thrale was no more; and it would have been well if his wife had been laid beside him. But she survived to be the laughing-stock of those who had envied her, and to draw from the eyes of the old man who had loved her beyond any thing in the world, tears far more bitter than he would have shed over her grave. With some estimable, and many agreeable qualities, she was not made to be independent. The control of a mind more steadfast than her own was necessary to her respectability. While she was restrained by her husband, a man of sense and firmness, indulgent to her taste in trifles, but always the undisputed master of his house, her worst offences had been impertinent jokes, white lies, and short fits of pettishness ending in sunny good humour. But he was gone; and she was left an opulent widow of forty, with strong sensibility, volatile fancy, and slender judgment. She soon fell in love with a music-master from Brescia, in whom nobody but herself could discover anything to admire. Her pride, and perhaps some better feelings, struggled hard against this degrading passion. But the struggle irritated her nerves, soured her temper, and at length endangered her health. Conscious that her choice was one which Johnson could not approve, she became desirous to escape from his inspection. Her manner towards him changed. She was sometimes cold and sometimes petulant. She did not conceal her joy when he left Streatham: she never pressed him to return; and, if he came unbidden, she received him in a manner which convinced him that he was no longer a welcome guest. He took the very intelligible hints which she gave. He read, for the last time, a chapter of the Greek Testament in the library which had been formed by himself. In

a solemn and tender prayer he commended the house and its inmates to the Divine protection, and, with emotions which choked his voice and convulsed his powerful frame, left for ever that beloved home for the gloomy and desolate house behind Fleet Street, where the few and evil days which still remained to him were to run out. Here, in June 1783, he had a paralytic stroke, from which, however, he recovered, and which does not appear to have at all impaired his intellectual faculties. But other maladies came thick upon him. His asthma tormented him day and night. Dropsical symptoms made their appearance. While sinking under a complication of diseases, he heard that the woman whose friendship had been the chief happiness of sixteen years of his life, had married an Italian fiddler; that all London was crying shame upon her; and that the newspapers and magazines were filled with allusions to the Ephesian matron and the two pictures in Hamlet. He vehemently said that he would try to forget her existence. He never uttered her name. Every memorial of her which met his eye he flung into the fire. She meanwhile fled from the laughter and hisses of her countrymen and countrywomen to a land where she was unknown, hastened across Mount Cenis, and learned, while passing a merry Christmas of concerts and lemonade parties at Milan, that the great man with whose name hers is inseparably associated, had ceased to exist.

He had, in spite of much mental and much bodily affliction, clung vehemently to life. The feeling described in that fine but gloomy paper which closes the series of his Idlers seemed to grow stronger in him as his last hour drew near. He fancied that he should be able to draw his breath more easily in a southern climate, and would probably have set out for Rome and Naples but for his fear of the expense of the journey. That expense, indeed, he had the means

of defraying; for he had laid up about two thousand pounds, the fruit of labours which had made the fortune of several publishers. But he was unwilling to break in upon this hoard, and he seems to have wished even to keep its existence a secret. Some of his friends hoped that the government might be induced to increase his pension to six hundred pounds a-year, but this hope was disappointed, and he resolved to stand one English winter more. That winter was his last. His legs grew weaker; his breath grew shorter; the fatal water gathered fast, in spite of incisions which he, courageous against pain, but timid against death, urged his surgeons to make deeper and deeper. Though the tender care which had mitigated his sufferings during months of sickness at Streatham was withdrawn, he was not left desolate. The ablest physicians and surgeons attended him, and refused to accept fees from him. Burke parted from him with deep emotion. Windham sate much in the sick room, arranged the pillows, and sent his own servant to watch at night by the bed. Frances Burney, whom the old man had cherished with fatherly kindness, stood weeping at the door; while Langton, whose piety eminently qualified him to be an adviser and comforter at such a time, received the last pressure of his friend's hand within. When at length the moment, dreaded through so many years, came close, the dark cloud passed away from Johnson's mind. His temper became unusually patient and gentle; he ceased to think with terror of death, and of that which lies beyond death; and he spoke much of the mercy of God, and of the propitiation of Christ. In this serene frame of mind he died on the 13th of December 1784. He was laid, a week later, in Westminster Abbey, among the eminent men of whom he had been the historian,—Cowley and Denham, Dryden and Congreve, Gay, Prior, and Addison.

Since his death the popularity of his works — the Lives of the Poets, and, perhaps, the Vanity of Human Wishes, excepted — has greatly diminished. His Dictionary has been altered by editors till it can scarcely be called his. An allusion to his Rambler or his Idler is not readily apprehended in literary circles. The fame even of Rasselas has grown somewhat dim. But though the celebrity of the writings may have declined, the celebrity of the writer, strange to say, is as great as ever. Boswell's book has done for him more than the best of his own books could do. The memory of other authors is kept alive by their works. But the memory of Johnson keeps many of his works alive. The old philosopher is still among us in the brown coat with the metal buttons and the shirt which ought to be at wash, blinking, puffing, rolling his head, drumming with his fingers, tearing his meat like a tiger, and swallowing his tea in oceans. No human being who has been more than seventy years in the grave is so well known to us. And it is but just to say that our intimate acquaintance with what he would himself have called the anfractuosities of his intellect and of his temper, serves only to strengthen our conviction that he was both a great and a good man.

BERTRAND BARÈRE.

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Memoires de Bertrand Barère; publiés par MM. HIPPOLYTE CARNOT, Membre de la Chambre des Députés, et DAVID d'Angers, Membre de l'Institut: précédés d'une Notice Historique par H. CARNOT, 4 Tomes. Paris: 1843.

THIS book has more than one title to our serious attention. It is an appeal, solemnly made to posterity by a man who played a conspicuous part in great events, and who represents himself as deeply aggrieved by the rash and malevolent censure of his contemporaries. To such an appeal we shall always give ready audience. We can perform no duty more useful to society, or more agreeable to our own feelings, than that of making, as far as our power extends, reparation to the slandered and persecuted benefactors of mankind. We therefore promptly took into our consideration this copious apology for the life of Bertrand Barère. We have made up our minds; and we now purpose to do him, by the blessing of God, full and signal justice.

It is to be observed that the appellant in this case does not come into court alone. He is attended to the bar of public opinion by two compurgators who occupy highly honourable stations. One of these is M. David of Angers, member of the institute, an eminent sculptor, and, if we have been rightly informed, a favourite pupil, though not a kinsman, of the

painter who bore the same name. The other, to whom we owe the biographical preface, is M. Hippolyte Carnot, member of the Chamber of Deputies, and son of the celebrated Director. In the judgment of M. David and of M. Hippolyte Carnot, Barère was a deserving and an ill-used man, a man who, though by no means faultless, must yet, when due allowance is made for the force of circumstances and the infirmity of human nature, be considered as on the whole entitled to our esteem. It will be for the public to determine, after a full hearing, whether the editors have, by thus connecting their names with that of Barère, raised his character or lowered their own.

We are not conscious that, when we opened this book, we were under the influence of any feeling likely to pervert our judgment. Undoubtedly we had long entertained a most unfavourable opinion of Barère; but to this opinion we were not tied by any passion or by any interest. Our dislike was a reasonable dislike, and might have been removed by reason. Indeed our expectation was, that these Memoirs would in some measure clear Barère's fame. That he could vindicate himself from all the charges which had been brought against him, we knew to be impossible; and his editors admit that he has not done so. But we thought it highly probable that some grave accusations would be refuted, and that many offences to which he would have been forced to plead guilty would be greatly extenuated. We were not disposed to be severe. We were fully aware that temptations such as those to which the members of the Convention and of the Committee of Public Safety were exposed must try severely the strength of the firmest virtue. Indeed our inclination has always been to regard with an indulgence, which to some rigid moralists appears excessive, those faults into which gentle and noble spirits are sometimes hurried by the excitement of conflict,

by the maddening influence of sympathy, and by ill-regulated zeal for a public cause.

With such feelings we read this book, and compared it with other accounts of the events in which Barère bore a part. It is now our duty to express the opinion to which this investigation has led us.

Our opinion then is this, that Barère approached nearer than any person mentioned in history or fiction, whether man or devil, to the idea of consummate and universal depravity. In him the qualities which are the proper objects of hatred, and the qualities which are the proper objects of contempt, preserve an exquisite and absolute harmony. In almost every particular sort of wickedness he has had rivals. His sensuality was immoderate; but this was a failing common to him with many great and amiable men. There have been many men as cowardly as he, some as cruel, a few as mean, a few as impudent. There may also have been as great liars, though we never met with them or read of them. But when we put every thing together, sensuality, poltroonery, baseness, effrontery, mendacity, barbarity, the result is something which in a novel we should condemn as caricature, and to which, we venture to say, no parallel can be found in history.

It would be grossly unjust, we acknowledge, to try a man situated as Barère was by a severe standard. Nor have we done so. We have formed our opinion of him by comparing him, not with politicians of stainless character, not with Chancellor D'Aguesseau, or General Washington, or Mr. Wilberforce, or Earl Grey, but with his own colleagues of the Mountain. That party included a considerable number of the worst men that ever lived; but we see in it nothing like Barère. Compared with him, Fouché seems honest; Billaud seems humane; Hébert seems to rise into dignity. Every

other chief of a party, says M. Hippolyte Carnot, has found apologists: one set of men exalts the Girondists; another set justifies Danton; a third deifies Robespierre: but Barère has remained without a defender. We venture to suggest a very simple solution of this phenomenon. All the other chiefs of parties had some good qualities, and Barère had none. The genius, courage, patriotism, and humanity of the Girondist statesmen, more than atoned for what was culpable in their conduct, and should have protected them from the insult of being compared with such a thing as Barère. Danton and Robespierre were indeed bad men; but in both of them some important parts of the mind remained sound. Danton was brave and resolute, fond of pleasure, of power, and of distinction, with vehement passions, with lax principles, but with some kind and manly feelings, capable of great crimes, but capable also of friendship and of compassion. He, therefore, naturally finds admirers among persons of bold and sanguine dispositions. Robespierre was a vain, envious, and suspicious man, with a hard heart, weak nerves, and a gloomy temper. But we cannot with truth deny that he was, in the vulgar sense of the word, disinterested, that his private life was correct, or that he was sincerely zealous for his own system of politics and morals. He, therefore, naturally finds admirers among honest but moody and bitter democrats. If no class has taken the reputation of Barère under its patronage, the reason is plain: Barère had not a single virtue, nor even the semblance of one.

It is true that he was not, as far as we are able to judge, originally of a savage disposition; but this circumstance seems to us only to aggravate his guilt. There are some unhappy men constitutionally prone to the darker passions, men all whose blood is gall, and to whom bitter words and harsh actions are as natural as snarling and biting to a

ferocious dog. To come into the world with this wretched mental disease is a greater calamity than to be born blind or deaf. A man who, having such a temper, keeps it in subjection, and constrains himself to behave habitually with justice and humanity towards those who are in his power, seems to us worthy of the highest admiration. There have been instances of this self-command; and they are among the most signal triumphs of philosophy and religion. On the other hand, a man who, having been blessed by nature with a bland disposition, gradually brings himself to inflict misery on his fellow-creatures with indifference, with satisfaction, and at length with a hideous rapture, deserves to be regarded as a portent of wickedness; and such a man was Barère. The history of his downward progress is full of instruction. Weakness, cowardice, and fickleness were born with him; the best quality which he received from nature was a good temper. These, it is true, are not very promising materials; yet out of materials as unpromising, high sentiments of piety and of honour have sometimes made martyrs and heroes. Rigid principles often do for feeble minds what stays do for feeble bodies. But Barère had no principles at all. His character was equally destitute of natural and of acquired strength. Neither in the commerce of life, nor in books, did we ever become acquainted with any mind so unstable, so utterly destitute of tone, so incapable of independent thought and earnest preference, so ready to take impressions and so ready to lose them. He resembled those creepers which must lean on something, and which, as soon as their prop is removed, fall down in utter helplessness. He could no more stand up, erect and self-supported, in any cause, than the ivy can rear itself like the oak, or the wild vine shoot to heaven like the cedar of Lebanon. It is barely possible that, under good guidance

and in favourable circumstances, such a man might have slipped through life without discredit. But the unseaworthy craft, which even in still water would have been in danger of going down from its own rottenness, was launched on a raging ocean, amidst a storm in which a whole armada of gallant ships was cast away. The weakest and most servile of human beings, found himself on a sudden an actor in a Revolution which convulsed the whole civilized world. At first he fell under the influence of humane and moderate men, and talked the language of humanity and moderation. But he soon found himself surrounded by fierce and resolute spirits, scared by no danger and restrained by no scruple. He had to choose whether he would be their victim or their accomplice. His choice was soon made. He tasted blood, and felt no loathing: he tasted it again, and liked it well. Cruelty became with him, first a habit, then a passion, at last a madness. So complete and rapid was the degeneracy of his nature, that within a very few months after the time when he had passed for a good-natured man, he had brought himself to look on the despair and misery of his fellow-creatures, with a glee resembling that of the fiends whom Dante saw watching the pool of seething pitch in Malebolge. He had many associates in guilt; but he distinguished himself from them all by the Bacchanalian exultation which he seemed to feel in the work of death. He was drunk with innocent and noble blood, laughed and shouted as he butchered, and howled strange songs and reeled in strange dances amidst the carnage. Then came a sudden and violent turn of fortune. The miserable man was hurled down from the height of power to hopeless ruin and infamy. The shock sobered him at once. The fumes of his horrible intoxication passed away. But he was now so irrecoverably depraved, that the discipline of adversity only drove him further into

wickedness. Ferocious vices, of which he had never been suspected, had been developed in him by power. Another class of vices, less hateful perhaps, but more despicable, was now developed in him by poverty and disgrace. Having appalled the whole world by great crimes perpetrated under the pretence of zeal for liberty, he became the meanest of all the tools of despotism. It is not easy to settle the order of precedence among his vices; but we are inclined to think that his baseness was, on the whole, a rarer and more marvellous thing than his cruelty.

This is the view which we have long taken of Barère's character; but, till we read these Memoirs,* we held our opinion with the diffidence which becomes a judge who has only heard one side. The case seemed strong, and in parts unanswerable: yet we did not know what the accused party might have to say for himself; and, not being much inclined to take our fellow-creatures either for angels of light or for angels of darkness, we could not but feel some suspicion that his offences had been exaggerated. That suspicion is now at an end. The vindication is before us. It occupies four volumes. It was the work of forty years. It would be absurd to suppose that it does not refute every serious charge which admitted of refutation. How many serious charges, then, are here refuted? Not a single one. Most of the imputations which have been thrown on Barère he does not even notice. In such cases, of course, judgment must go against him by default. The fact is, that nothing can be more meagre and uninteresting than his account of the great public transaction in which he was engaged. He gives us hardly a word of new information respecting the proceedings of the Committee of Public Safety; and, by way of compensation, tells us long stories about things which happened before he emerged from obscurity, and after he had again

sunk into it. Nor is this the worst. As soon as he ceases to write trifles, he begins to write lies; and such lies! A man who has never been within the tropics does not know what a thunder storm means; a man who has never looked on Niagara has but a faint idea of a cataract; and he who has not read Barère's Memoirs may be said not to know what it is to lie. Among the numerous classes which make up the great genus *Mendacium*, the *Mendacium Vasconicum*, or Gascon lie, has, during some centuries, been highly esteemed as peculiarly circumstantial and peculiarly impudent; and among the *Mendacia Vasconica*, the *Mendacium Barerianum* is, without doubt, the finest species. It is indeed a superb variety, and quite throws into the shade some *Mendacia* which we were used to regard with admiration. The *Mendacium Wraxallianum*, for example, though by no means to be despised, will not sustain the comparison for a moment. Seriously, we think that M. Hippolyte Carnot is much to blame in this matter. We can hardly suppose him to be worse read than ourselves in the history of the Convention, a history which must interest him deeply, not only as a Frenchman, but also as a son. He must, therefore, be perfectly aware that many of the most important statements which these volumes contain are falsehoods, such as Corneille's Dorante, or Molière's Scapin, or Colin d'Harleville's Monsieur de Crac would have been ashamed to utter. We are far, indeed, from holding M. Hippolyte Carnot answerable for Barère's want of veracity. But M. Hippolyte Carnot has arranged these Memoirs, has introduced them to the world by a laudatory preface, has described them as documents of great historical value, and has illustrated them by notes. We cannot but think that, by acting thus, he contracted some obligations of which he does not seem to have been at all aware; and that he ought not to have suffered any

monstrous fiction to go forth under the sanction of his name, without adding a line at the foot of the page for the purpose of cautioning the reader.

We will content ourselves at present with pointing out two instances of Barère's wilful and deliberate mendacity; namely, his account of the death of Marie Antoinette, and his account of the death of the Girondists. His account of the death of Marie Antoinette is as follows: — "Robespierre in his turn proposed that the members of the Capet family should be banished, and that Marie Antoinette should be brought to trial before the Revolutionary Tribunal. He would have been better employed in concerting military measures which might have repaired our disasters in Belgium, and might have arrested the progress of the enemies of the Revolution in the west." — (Vol. ii. p. 312.)

Now, it is notorious that Marie Antoinette was sent before the Revolutionary Tribunal, not at Robespierre's instance, but in direct opposition to Robespierre's wishes. We will cite a single authority, which is quite decisive. Bonaparte, who had no conceivable motive to disguise the truth, who had the best opportunities of knowing the truth, and who, after his marriage with the Archduchess, naturally felt an interest in the fate of his wife's kinswoman, distinctly affirmed that Robespierre opposed the trying of the Queen. * Who, then, was the person who really did propose that the Capet family should be banished, and that Marie Antoinette should be tried? Full information will be found in the *Moniteur*. ** From that valuable record it appears that, on the first of August 1793, an orator deputed by the Committee of Public Safety addressed the Convention in a long and elaborate discourse. He asked,

* O'Meara's *Voice from St. Helena*, ii. 170.

** *Moniteur*, 2d, 7th, and 9th of August 1793.

in passionate language, how it happened that the enemies of the republic still continued to hope for success. "Is it," he cried, "because we have too long forgotten the crimes of the Austrian woman? Is it because we have shown so strange an indulgence to the race of our ancient tyrants? It is time that this unwise apathy should cease; it is time to extirpate from the soil of the republic the last roots of royalty. As for the children of Louis the conspirator, they are hostages for the Republic. The charge of their maintenance shall be reduced to what is necessary for the food and keep of two individuals. The public treasure shall no longer be lavished on creatures who have too long been considered as privileged. But behind them lurks a woman who has been the cause of all the disasters of France, and whose share in every project adverse to the Revolution has long been known. National justice claims its rights over her. It is to the tribunal appointed for the trial of conspirators that she ought to be sent. It is only by striking the Austrian woman that you can make Francis and George, Charles and William, sensible of the crimes which their ministers and their armies have committed." The speaker concluded by moving, that Marie Antoinette should be brought to judgment, and should, for that end, be forthwith transferred to the Conciergerie; and that all the members of the house of Capet, with the exception of those who were under the sword of the law, and of the two children of Louis, should be banished from the French territory. The motion was carried without debate.

Now, who was the person who made this speech and this motion? It was Barère himself. It is clear, then, that Barère attributed his own mean insolence and barbarity to one who, whatever his crimes may have been, was in this matter innocent. The only question remaining is, whether Barère

was misled by his memory, or wrote a deliberate falsehood.

We are convinced that he wrote a deliberate falsehood. His memory is described by his editors as remarkably good, and must have been bad indeed if he could not remember such a fact as this. It is true that the number of murders in which he subsequently bore a part was so great, that he might well confound one with another, that he might well forget what part of the daily hecatomb was consigned to death by himself, and what part by his colleagues. But two circumstances make it quite incredible that the share which he took in the death of Marie Antoinette should have escaped his recollection. She was one of his earliest victims. She was one of his most illustrious victims. The most hardened assassin remembers the first time that he shed blood; and the widow of Louis was no ordinary sufferer. If the question had been about some milliner butchered for hiding in her garret her brother who had let drop a word against the Jacobin club — if the question had been about some old nun, dragged to death for having mumbled what were called fanatical words over her beads — Barère's memory might well have deceived him. It would be as unreasonable to expect him to remember all the wretches whom he slew, as all the pinches of snuff that he took. But though Barère murdered many hundreds of human beings, he murdered only one Queen. That he, a small country lawyer, who, a few years before, would have thought himself honoured by a glance or a word from the daughter of so many Cæsars, should call her the Austrian woman, should send her from jail to jail, should deliver her over to the executioner, was surely a great event in his life. Whether he had reason to be proud of it or ashamed of it, is a question on which we may perhaps differ from his editors; but they will admit, we think, that he could not have forgotten it.

We, therefore, confidently charge Barère with having written a deliberate falsehood; and we have no hesitation in saying, that we never, in the course of any historical researches that we have happened to make, fell in with a falsehood so audacious, except only the falsehood which we are about to expose.

Of the proceeding against the Girondists, Barère speaks with just severity. He calls it an atrocious injustice perpetrated against the legislators of the republic. He complains that distinguished deputies, who ought to have been readmitted to their seats in the Convention, were sent to the scaffold as conspirators. The day, he exclaims, was a day of mourning for France. It mutilated the national representation; it weakened the sacred principle, that the delegates of the people were inviolable. He protests that he had no share in the guilt. "I have had," he says, "the patience to go through the *Moniteur*, extracting all the charges brought against deputies, and all the decrees for arresting and impeaching deputies. Nowhere will you find my name. I never brought a charge against any of my colleagues, or made a report against any, or drew up an impeachment against any." *

Now, we affirm that this is a lie. We affirm that Barère himself took the lead in the proceedings of the Convention against the Girondists. We affirm that he, on the twenty-eighth of July 1793, proposed a decree for bringing nine Girondist deputies to trial, and for putting to death sixteen other Girondist deputies without any trial at all. We affirm that, when the accused deputies had been brought to trial, and when some apprehension arose that their eloquence might produce an effect even on the Revolutionary Tribunal, Barère

* Vol. ii. 407.

did, on the 8th of Brumaire, second a motion for a decree authorising the tribunal to decide without hearing out the defence; and, for the truth of every one of these things so affirmed by us, we appeal to that very *Moniteur* to which Barère has dared to appeal. *

What M. Hippolyte Carnot, knowing, as he must know, that this book contains such falsehoods as those which we have exposed, can have meant, when he described it as a valuable addition to our stock of historical information, passes our comprehension. When a man is not ashamed to tell lies about events which took place before hundreds of witnesses, and which are recorded in well-known and accessible books, what credit can we give to his account of things done in corners? No historian who does not wish to be laughed at will ever cite the unsupported authority of Barère as sufficient to prove any fact whatever. The only thing, as far as we can see, on which these volumes throw any light, is the exceeding baseness of the author.

So much for the veracity of the Memoirs. In a literary point of view, they are beneath criticism. They are as shallow, flippant, and affected, as Barère's oratory in the Convention. They are also, what his oratory in the Convention was not, utterly insipid. In fact, they are the mere dregs and rinsings of a bottle, of which even the first froth was but of very questionable flavour.

We will now try to present our readers with a sketch of this man's life. We shall, of course, make very sparing use indeed of his own Memoirs; and never without distrust, except where they are confirmed by other evidence.

Bertrand Barère was born in the year 1755, at Tarbes in Gascony. His father was the propietor of a small estate at

* *Moniteur*, 31st of July 1793, and Nonidi, first Decade of Brumaire, in the year 2.

Vieuzac, in the beautiful vale of Argelès. Bertrand always loved to be called Barère de Vieuzac, and flattered himself with the hope that, by the help of this feudal addition to his name, he might pass for a gentleman. He was educated for the bar at Toulouse, the seat of one of the most celebrated parliaments of the kingdom, practised as an advocate with considerable success, and wrote some small pieces, which he sent to the principal literary societies in the south of France. Among provincial towns, Toulouse seems to have been remarkably rich in indifferent versifiers and critics. It gloried especially in one venerable institution, called the Academy of the Floral Games. This body held every year a grand meeting, which was a subject of intense interest to the whole city, and at which flowers of gold and silver were given as prizes for odes, for idyls, and for something that was called eloquence. These bounties produced of course the ordinary effect of bounties, and turned people who might have been thriving attorneys and useful apothecaries into small wits and bad poets. Barère does not appear to have been so lucky as to obtain any of these precious flowers; but one of his performances was mentioned with honour. At Montauban he was more fortunate. The Academy of that town bestowed on him several prizes, one for a panegyric on Louis the Twelfth, in which the blessings of monarchy and the loyalty of the French nation were set forth; and another for a panegyric on poor Franc de Pompignan, in which, as may easily be supposed, the philosophy of the eighteenth century was sharply assailed. Then Barère found an old stone inscribed with three Latin words, and wrote a dissertation upon it, which procured him a seat in a learned Assembly, called the Toulouse Academy of Sciences, Inscriptions, and Polite Literature. At length the doors of the Academy of the Floral Games were opened to so much merit. Barère, in his

thirty-third year, took his seat as one of that illustrious brotherhood, and made an inaugural oration which was greatly admired. He apologises for recounting these triumphs of his youthful genius. We own that we cannot blame him for dwelling long on the least disgraceful portion of his existence. To send in declamations for prizes offered by provincial academies, is indeed no very useful or dignified employment for a bearded man; but it would have been well if Barère had always been so employed.

In 1785 he married a young lady of considerable fortune. Whether she was in other respects qualified to make a home happy, is a point respecting which we are imperfectly informed. In a little work, entitled Melancholy Pages, which was written in 1797, Barère avers that his marriage was one of mere convenience, that at the altar his heart was heavy with sorrowful forebodings, that he turned pale as he pronounced the solemn "Yes," that unbidden tears rolled down his cheeks, that his mother shared his presentiment, and that the evil omen was accomplished. "My marriage," he says, "was one of the most unhappy of marriages." So romantic a tale, told by so noted a liar, did not command our belief. We were, therefore, not much surprised to discover that, in his Memoirs, he calls his wife a most amiable woman, and declares that, after he had been united to her six years, he found her as amiable as ever. He complains, indeed, that she was too much attached to royalty and to the old superstition; but he assures us that his respect for her virtues induced him to tolerate her prejudices. Now Barère, at the time of his marriage, was himself a Royalist and a Catholic. He had gained one prize by flattering the Throne, and another by defending the Church. It is hardly possible, therefore, that disputes about politics or religion should have embittered his domestic life till some time after he became a husband.

Our own guess is, that his wife was, as he says, a virtuous and amiable woman, and that she did her best to make him happy during some years. It seems clear that, when circumstances developed the latent atrocity of his character, she could no longer endure him, refused to see him, and sent back his letters unopened. Then it was, we imagine, that he invented the fable about his distress on his wedding day.

In 1788 Barère paid his first visit to Paris, attended reviews, heard Laharpe at the Lyceum, and Condorcet at the Academy of Sciences, stared at the envoys of Tippoo Saib, saw the Royal Family dine at Versailles, and kept a journal in which he noted down adventures and speculations. Some parts of this journal are printed in the first volume of the work before us, and are certainly most characteristic. The worst vices of the writer had not yet shown themselves; but the weakness which was the parent of those vices appears in every line. His levity, his inconsistency, his servility, were already what they were to the last. All his opinions, all his feelings, spin round and round like a weathercock in a whirlwind. Nay, the very impressions which he receives through his senses are not the same two days together. He sees Louis the Sixteenth, and is so much blinded by loyalty as to find his Majesty handsome. "I fixed my eyes," he says, "with a lively curiosity on his fine countenance, which I thought open and noble." The next time that the King appears, all is altered. His Majesty's eyes are without the smallest expression; he has a vulgar laugh which seems like idiocy, an ignoble figure, an awkward gait, and the look of a big boy ill brought up. It is the same with more important questions. Barère is for the parliaments on the Monday and against the parliaments on the Tuesday, for feudality in the morning and against feudality in the afternoon. One day he admires the English constitution: then he shudders

to think that, in the struggles by which that constitution had been obtained, the barbarous islanders had murdered a king, and gives the preference to the constitution of Bearn. Bearn, he says, has a sublime constitution, a beautiful constitution. There the nobility and clergy meet in one house and the Commons in another. If the houses differ, the King has the casting vote. A few weeks later we find him raving against the principles of this sublime and beautiful constitution. To admit deputies of the nobility and clergy into the legislature is, he says, neither more nor less than to admit enemies of the nation into the legislature.

In this state of mind, without one settled purpose or opinion, the slave of the last word, royalist, aristocrat, democrat according to the prevailing sentiment of the coffee-house or drawing-room into which he had just looked, did Barère enter into public life. The States-General had been summoned. Barère went down to his own province, was there elected one of the representatives of the Third Estate, and returned to Paris in May 1789.

A great crisis, often predicted, had at last arrived. In no country, we conceive, have intellectual freedom and political servitude existed together so long as in France, during the seventy or eighty years which preceded the last convocation of the Orders. Ancient abuses and new theories flourished in equal vigour side by side. The people, having no constitutional means of checking even the most flagitious misgovernment, were indemnified for oppression by being suffered to luxuriate in anarchical speculation, and to deny or ridicule every principle on which the institutions of the state reposed. Neither those who attribute the downfall of the old French institutions to the public grievances, nor those who attribute it to the doctrines of the philosophers, appear to us to have taken into their view more than one half

of the subject. Grievances as heavy have often been endured without producing a revolution; doctrines as bold have often been propounded without producing a revolution. The question, whether the French nation was alienated from its old polity by the follies and vices of the Viziers and Sultanas who pillaged and disgraced it, or by the writings of Voltaire and Rousseau, seems to us as idle as the question whether it was fire or gunpowder that blew up the mills at Hounslow. Neither cause would have sufficed alone. Tyranny may last through ages where discussion is suppressed. Discussion may safely be left free by rulers who act on popular principles. But combine a press like that of London, with a government like that of St. Petersburg, and the inevitable effect will be an explosion that will shake the world. So it was in France. Despotism and License, mingling in unblessed union, engendered that mighty Revolution in which the lineaments of both parents were strangely blended. The long gestation was accomplished; and Europe saw, with mixed hope and terror, that agonizing travail and that portentous birth.

Among the crowd of legislators which at this conjuncture poured from all the provinces of France into Paris, Barère made no contemptible figure. The opinions which he for the moment professed were popular, yet not extreme. His character was fair; his personal advantages are said to have been considerable; and, from the portrait which is prefixed to these Memoirs, and which represents him as he appeared in the Convention, we should judge that his features must have been strikingly handsome, though we think that we can read in them cowardice and meanness very legibly written by the hand of God. His conversation was lively and easy; his manners remarkably good for a country lawyer. Women of rank and wit said that he was the only man who, on his first arrival from a remote province, had that indescribable

air which it was supposed that Paris alone could give. His eloquence, indeed, was by no means so much admired in the capital as it had been by the ingenious academicians of Montauban and Toulouse. His style was thought very bad; and very bad, if a foreigner may venture to judge, it continued to the last. It would, however, be unjust to deny that he had some talents for speaking and writing. His rhetoric, though deformed by every imaginable fault of taste, from bombast down to buffoonery, was not wholly without force and vivacity. He had also one quality which, in active life, often gives fourth-rate men an advantage over first-rate men. Whatever he could do, he could do without effort, at any moment, in any abundance, and on any side of any question. There was, indeed, a perfect harmony between his moral character and his intellectual character. His temper was that of a slave; his abilities were exactly those which qualified him to be a useful slave. Of thinking to purpose, he was utterly incapable; but he had wonderful readiness in arranging and expressing thoughts furnished by others.

In the National Assembly he had no opportunity of displaying the full extent either of his talents or of his vices. He was indeed eclipsed by much abler men. He went, as was his habit, with the stream, spoke occasionally with some success, and edited a journal called the *Point du Jour*, in which the debates of the Assembly were reported.

He at first ranked by no means among the violent reformers. He was not friendly to that new division of the French territory which was among the most important changes introduced by the Revolution, and was especially unwilling to see his native province dismembered. He was entrusted with the task of framing Reports on the Woods and Forests. Louis was exceedingly anxious about this matter; for his majesty was a keen sportsman, and would much rather have

gone without the Veto, or the prerogative of making peace and war, than without his hunting and shooting. Gentlemen of the royal household were sent to Barère, in order to intercede for the deer and pheasants. Nor was this intercession unsuccessful. The reports were so drawn, that Barère was afterwards accused of having dishonestly sacrificed the interests of the public to the tastes of the court. To one of these reports he had the inconceivable folly and bad taste to prefix a punning motto from Virgil, fit only for such essays as he had been in the habit of composing for the Floral Games —

"Si canimus sylvas, sylvæ sunt Consule dignæ."

This literary foppery was one of the few things in which he was consistent. Royalist or Girondist, Jacobin or Imperialist, he was always a Trissotin.

As the monarchical party became weaker and weaker, Barère gradually estranged himself more and more from it, and drew closer and closer to the republicans. It would seem that, during this transition, he was for a time closely connected with the family of Orleans. It is certain that he was entrusted with the guardianship of the celebrated Pamela, afterwards Lady Edward Fitzgerald; and it was asserted that he received during some years a pension of twelve thousand francs from the Palais Royal.

At the end of September 1791, the labours of the National Assembly terminated, and those of the first and last Legislative Assembly commenced.

It had been enacted that no member of the National Assembly should sit in the Legislative Assembly; a preposterous and mischievous regulation, to which the disasters which followed must in part be ascribed. In England, what would be thought of a parliament which did not contain one single person who had ever sat in parliament before? Yet it may

safely be affirmed, that the number of Englishmen who, never having taken any share in public affairs, are yet well qualified, by knowledge and observation, to be members of the legislature, is at least a hundred times as great as the number of Frenchmen who were so qualified in 1791. How, indeed, should it have been otherwise? In England, centuries of representative government have made all educated people in some measure statesmen. In France, the National Assembly had probably been composed of as good materials as were then to be found. It had undoubtedly removed a vast mass of abuses; some of its members had read and thought much about theories of government; and others had shown great oratorical talents. But that kind of skill which is required for the constructing, launching, and steering of a polity was lamentably wanting; for it is a kind of skill to which practice contributes more than books. Books are indeed useful to the politician, as they are useful to the navigator and to the surgeon. But the real navigator is formed on the waves; the real surgeon is formed at bedsides; and the conflicts of free states are the real school of constitutional statesmen. The National Assembly had, however, now served an apprenticeship of two laborious and eventful years. It had, indeed, by no means finished its education; but it was no longer, as on the day when it met, altogether rude to political functions. Its later proceedings contain abundant proof that the members had profited by their experience. Beyond all doubt, there was not in France any equal number of persons possessing in an equal degree the qualities necessary for the judicious direction of public affairs; and, just at this moment, these legislators, misled by a childish wish to display their own disinterestedness, deserted the duties which they had half learned, and which nobody else had learned at all, and left their hall to a second crowd of novices, who had still to

master the first rudiments of political business. When Barère wrote his Memoirs, the absurdity of this Self-denying Ordinance had been proved by events, and was, we believe, acknowledged by all parties. He accordingly, with his usual mendacity, speaks of it in terms implying that he had opposed it. There was, he tells us, no good citizen who did not regret this fatal vote. Nay, all wise men, he says, wished the National Assembly to continue its sittings as the first Legislative Assembly. But no attention was paid to the wishes of the enlightened friends of liberty; and the generous but fatal suicide was perpetrated. Now the fact is, that Barère, far from opposing this ill-advised measure, was one of those who most eagerly supported it; that he described it from the tribune as wise and magnanimous; and that he assigned, as his reasons for taking this view, some of those phrases in which orators of his class delight, and which, on all men who have the smallest insight into politics, produce an effect very similar to that of ipecacuanha. "Those," he said, "who have framed a constitution for their country, are, so to speak, out of the pale of that social state of which they are the authors; for creative power is not in the same sphere with that which it has created."

M. Hippolyte Carnot has noticed this untruth, and attributes it to mere forgetfulness. We leave it to him to reconcile his very charitable supposition with what he elsewhere says of the remarkable excellence of Barère's memory.[1]

Many members of the National Assembly were indemnified for the sacrifice of legislative power, by appointments in various departments of the public service. Of these fortunate persons Barère was one. A high Court of Appeal had just been instituted. This court was to sit at Paris; but its jurisdiction was to extend over the whole realm, and the departments were to choose the judges. Barère was nominated by

the department of the Upper Pyrenees, and took his seat in the Palace of Justice. He asserts, and our readers may, if they choose, believe, that it was about this time in contemplation to make him Minister of the Interior, and that, in order to avoid so grave a responsibility, he obtained permission to pay a visit to his native place. It is certain that he left Paris early in the year 1792, and passed some months in the south of France.

In the mean time, it became clear that the constitution of 1791 would not work. It was, indeed, not to be expected, that a constitution new both in its principles and its details would at first work easily. Had the chief magistrate enjoyed the entire confidence of the people, had he performed his part with the utmost zeal, fidelity, and ability, had the representative body included all the wisest statesmen of France, the difficulties might still have been found insuperable. But, in fact, the experiment was made under every disadvantage. The King, very naturally, hated the constitution. In the Legislative Assembly were men of genius and men of good intentions, but not a single man of experience. Nevertheless, if France had been suffered to settle her own affairs without foreign interference, it is possible that the calamities which followed might have been averted. The King who, with many good qualities, was sluggish and sensual, might have found compensation for his lost prerogatives in his immense civil list, in his palaces and hunting grounds, in soups, Perigord pies, and Champagne. The people, finding themselves secure in the enjoyment of the valuable reforms which the National Assembly had, in the midst of all its errors, effected, would not have been easily excited by demagogues to acts of atrocity; or, if acts of atrocity had been committed, those acts would probably have produced a speedy and violent reaction. Had tolerable quiet been pre-

served during a few years, the constitution of 1791 might perhaps have taken root, might have gradually acquired the strength which time alone can give, and might, with some modifications which were undoubtedly needed, have lasted down to the present time. The European coalition against the Revolution extinguished all hope of such a result. The deposition of Louis was, in our opinion, the necessary consequence of that coalition. The question was now no longer, whether the King should have an absolute Veto or a suspensive Veto, whether there should be one chamber or two chambers, whether the members of the representative body should be reeligible or not; but whether France should belong to the French. The independence of the nation, the integrity of the territory, were at stake; and we must say plainly, that we cordially approve of the conduct of those Frenchmen who, at that conjuncture, resolved, like our own Blake, to play the men for their country, under whatever form of government their country might fall.

It seems to us clear that the war with the Continental coalition was, on the side of France, at first a defensive war, and therefore a just war. It was not a war for small objects, or against despicable enemies. On the event were staked all the dearest interests of the French people. Foremost among the threatening powers appeared two great and martial monarchies, either of which, situated as France then was, might be regarded as a formidable assailant. It is evident that, under such circumstances, the French could not, without extreme imprudence, entrust the supreme administration of their affairs to any person whose attachment to the national cause admitted of doubt. Now, it is no reproach to the memory of Louis to say, that he was not attached to the national cause. Had he been so, he would have been something more than man. He had held absolute power, not by

usurpation, but by the accident of birth and by the ancient polity of the kingdom. That power he had, on the whole, used with lenity. He had meant well by his people. He had been willing to make to them, of his own mere motion, concessions such as scarcely any other sovereign has ever made except under duress. He had paid the penalty of faults not his own, of the haughtiness and ambition of some of his predecessors, of the dissoluteness and baseness of others. He had been vanquished, taken captive, led in triumph, put in ward. He had escaped; he had been caught; he had been dragged back like a runaway galley-slave to the oar. He was still a state prisoner. His quiet was broken by daily affronts and lampoons. Accustomed from the cradle to be treated with profound reverence, he was now forced to command his feelings, while men who, a few months before, had been hackney writers or country attorneys, sat in his presence with covered heads, and addressed him in the easy tone of equality. Conscious of fair intentions, sensible of hard usage, he doubtless detested the Revolution; and, while charged with the conduct of the war against the confederates, pined in secret for the sight of the German eagles and the sound of the German drums. We do not blame him for this. But can we blame those who, being resolved to defend the work of the National Assembly against the interference of strangers, were not disposed to have him at their head in the fearful struggle which was approaching? We have nothing to say in defence or extenuation of the insolence, injustice, and cruelty, with which, after the victory of the republicans, he and his family were treated. But this we say, that the French had only one alternative, to deprive him of the powers of first magistrate, or to ground their arms and submit patiently to foreign dictation. The events of the tenth of August sprang inevitably from the league of Pillnitz.

The King's palace was stormed; his guards were slaughtered. He was suspended from his regal functions; and the Legislative Assembly invited the nation to elect an extraordinary Convention, with the full powers which the conjuncture required. To this Convention the members of the National Assembly were eligible; and Barère was chosen by his own department.

The Convention met on the twenty-first of September 1792. The first proceedings were unanimous. Royalty was abolished by acclamation. No objections were made to this great change, and no reasons were assigned for it. For certainly we cannot honour with the name of reasons such apophthegms, as that kings are in the moral world what monsters are in the physical world; and that the history of kings is the martyrology of nations. But though the discussion was worthy only of a debating-club of schoolboys, the resolution to which the Convention came seems to have been that which sound policy dictated. In saying this, we do not mean to express an opinion that a republic is, either in the abstract the best form of government, or is, under ordinary circumstances, the form of government best suited to the French people. Our own opinion is, that the best governments which have ever existed in the world have been limited monarchies; and that France, in particular, has never enjoyed so much prosperity and freedom as under a limited monarchy. Nevertheless, we approve of the vote of the Convention which abolished kingly government. The interference of foreign powers had brought on a crisis which made extraordinary measures necessary. Hereditary monarchy may be, and we believe that it is, a very useful institution in a country like France. And masts are very useful parts of a ship. But, if the ship is on her beam-ends, it may be necessary to cut the masts away. When once she has righted, she may come safe

into port under jury rigging, and there be completely repaired. But, in the mean time, she must be hacked with unsparing hand, lest that which, under ordinary circumstances, is an essential part of her fabric, should, in her extreme distress, sink her to the bottom. Even so there are political emergencies in which it is necessary that governments should be mutilated of their fair proportions for a time, lest they be cast away for ever; and with such an emergency the Convention had to deal. The first object of a good Frenchman should have been to save France from the fate of Poland. The first requisite of a government was entire devotion to the national cause. That requisite was wanting in Louis; and such a want, at such a moment, could not be supplied by any public or private virtues. If the King were set aside, the abolition of kingship necessarily followed. In the state in which the public mind then was, it would have been idle to think of doing what our ancestors did in 1688, and what the French Chamber of Deputies did in 1830. Such an attempt would have failed amidst universal derision and execration. It would have disgusted all zealous men of all opinions; and there were then few men who were not zealous. Parties fatigued by long conflict, and instructed by the severe discipline of that school in which alone mankind will learn, are disposed to listen to the voice of a mediator. But when they are in their first heady youth, devoid of experience, fresh for exertion, flushed with hope, burning with animosity, they agree only in spurning out of their way the daysman who strives to take his stand between them and to lay his hand upon them both. Such was in 1792 the state of France. On one side was the great name of the heir of Hugh Capet, the thirty-third king of the third race; on the other side was the great name of the republic. There was no rallying-point save these two. It was necessary to make a choice; and those, in our opinion, judged

well who, waving for the moment all subordinate questions, preferred independence to subjugation, the natal soil to the emigrant camp.

As to the abolition of royalty, and as to the vigorous prosecution of the war, the whole Convention seemed to be united as one man. But a deep and broad gulf separated the representative body into two great parties.

On one side were those statesmen who are called, from the name of the department which some of them represented, the Girondists, and, from the name of one of their most conspicuous leaders, the Brissotins. In activity and practical ability, Brissot and Gensonné were the most conspicuous among them. In parliamentary eloquence, no Frenchman of that time can be considered as equal to Vergniaud. In a foreign country, and after the lapse of half a century, some parts of his speeches are still read with mournful admiration. No man, we are inclined to believe, ever rose so rapidly to such a height of oratorical excellence. His whole public life lasted barely two years. This is a circumstance which distinguishes him from our own greatest speakers, Fox, Burke, Pitt, Sheridan, Windham, Canning. Which of these celebrated men would now be remembered as an orator, if he had died two years after he first took his seat in the House of Commons? Condorcet brought to the Girondist party a different kind of strength. The public regarded him with justice as an eminent mathematician, and, with less reason, as a great master of ethical and political science; the philosophers considered him as their chief, as the rightful heir, by intellectual descent and by solemn adoption, of their deceased sovereign D'Alembert. In the same ranks were found Guadet, Isnard, Barbaroux, Buzot, Louvet, too well known as the author of a very ingenious and very licentious romance, and more honourably distinguished by the generosity with which he

pleaded for the unfortunate, and by the intrepidity with which he defied the wicked and powerful. Two persons whose talents were not brilliant, but who enjoyed a high reputation for probity and public spirit, Pétion and Roland, lent the whole weight of their names to the Girondist connexion. The wife of Roland brought to the deliberations of her husband's friends masculine courage and force of thought, tempered by womanly grace and vivacity. Nor was the splendour of a great military reputation wanting to this celebrated party. Dumouriez, then victorious over the foreign invaders, and at the height of popular favour, must be reckoned among the allies of the Gironde.

The errors of the Brissotins were undoubtedly neither few nor small; but when we fairly compare their conduct with the conduct of any other party which acted or suffered during the French Revolution, we are forced to admit their superiority in every quality except that single quality which, in such times, prevails over every other decision. They were zealous for the great social reform which had been effected by the National Assembly; and they were right. For though that reform was, in some respects, carried too far, it was a blessing well worth even the fearful price which has been paid for it. They were resolved to maintain the independence of their country against foreign invaders; and they were right. For the heaviest of all yokes is the yoke of the stranger. They thought that, if Louis remained at their head, they could not carry on with the requisite energy the conflict against the European coalition. They therefore concurred in establishing a republican government; and here, again, they were right. For in that struggle for life and death, it would have been madness to trust a hostile or even a half-hearted leader.

Thus far they went along with the revolutionary movement. At this point they stopped; and, in our judgment,

they were right in stopping, as they had been right in moving. For great ends, and under extraordinary circumstances, they had concurred in measures which, together with much good, had necessarily produced much evil; which had unsettled the public mind; which had taken away from government the sanction of prescription; which had loosened the very foundations of property and law. They thought that it was now their duty to prop what it had recently been their duty to batter. They loved liberty, but liberty associated with order, with justice, with mercy, and with civilisation. They were republicans; but they were desirous to adorn their republic with all that had given grace and dignity to the fallen monarchy. They hoped that the humanity, the courtesy, the taste, which had done much in old times to mitigate the slavery of France, would now lend additional charms to her freedom. They saw with horror crimes exceeding in atrocity those which had disgraced the infuriated religious factions of the sixteenth century, perpetrated in the name of reason and philanthropy. They demanded, with eloquent vehemence, that the authors of the lawless massacre which, just before the meeting of the Convention, had been committed in the prisons of Paris, should be brought to condign punishment. They treated with just contempt the pleas which have been set up for that great crime. They admitted that the public danger was pressing; but they denied that it justified a violation of those principles of morality on which all society rests. The independence and honour of France were indeed to be vindicated, but to be vindicated by triumphs and not by murders.

Opposed to the Girondists was a party, which, having been long execrated throughout the civilised world, has of late — such is the ebb and flow of opinion — found not only apologists, but even eulogists. We are not disposed to deny

that some members of the Mountain were sincere and public-spirited men. But even the best of them, Carnot for example and Cambon, were far too unscrupulous as to the means which they employed for the purpose of attaining great ends. In the train of these enthusiasts followed a crowd, composed of all who, from sensual, sordid, or malignant motives, wished for a period of boundless license.

When the Convention met, the majority was with the Girondists, and Barère was with the majority. On the King's trial, indeed, he quitted the party with which he ordinarily acted, voted with the Mountain, and spoke against the prisoner with a violence such as few members even of the Mountain showed.

The conduct of the leading Girondists on that occasion was little to their honour. Of cruelty, indeed, we fully acquit them; but it is impossible to acquit them of criminal irresolution and disingenuousness. They were far, indeed, from thirsting for the blood of Louis; on the contrary, they were most desirous to protect him. But they were afraid that, if they went straight forward to their object, the sincerity of their attachment to republican institutions would be suspected. They wished to save the King's life, and yet to obtain all the credit of having been regicides. Accordingly, they traced out for themselves a crooked course, by which they hoped to attain both their objects. They first voted the King guilty. They then voted for referring the question respecting his fate to the whole body of the people. Defeated in this attempt to rescue him, they reluctantly, and with ill suppressed shame and concern, voted for the capital sentence. Then they made a last attempt in his favour, and voted for respiting the execution. These zigzag politics produced the effect which any man conversant with public affairs might have foreseen. The Girondists, instead of attaining both

their ends, failed of both. The Mountain justly charged them with having attempted to save the King by underhand means. Their own consciences told them, with equal justice, that their hands had been dipped in the blood of the most inoffensive and most unfortunate of men. The direct path was here, as usual, the path not only of honour but of safety. The principle on which the Girondists stood as a party was, that the season for revolutionary violence was over, and that the reign of law and order ought now to commence. But the proceeding against the King was clearly revolutionary in its nature. It was not in conformity with the laws. The only plea for it was, that all ordinary rules of jurisprudence and morality were suspended by the extreme public danger. This was the very plea which the Mountain urged in defence of the massacre of September, and to which, when so urged, the Girondists refused to listen. They therefore, by voting for the death of the King, conceded to the Mountain the chief point at issue between the two parties. Had they given a manful vote against the capital sentence, the regicides would have been in a minority. It is probable that there would have been an immediate appeal to force. The Girondists might have been victorious. In the worst event, they would have fallen with unblemished honour. Thus much is certain, that their boldness and honesty could not possibly have produced a worse effect than was actually produced by their timidity and their stratagems.

Barère, as we have said, sided with the Mountain on this occasion. He voted against the appeal to the people, and against the respite. His demeanour and his language also were widely different from those of the Girondists. Their hearts were heavy, and their deportment was that of men oppressed by sorrow. It was Vergniaud's duty to proclaim the result of the roll-call. His face was pale, and he trembled

with emotion, as in a low and broken voice he announced that Louis was condemned to death. Barère had not, it is true, yet attained to full perfection in the art of mingling jests and conceits with words of death; but he already gave promise of his future excellence in this high department of Jacobin oratory. He concluded his speech with a sentence worthy of his head and heart. "The tree of liberty," he said, "as an ancient author remarks, flourishes when it is watered with the blood of all classes of tyrants." M. Hippolyte Carnot has quoted this passage, in order, as we suppose, to do honour to his hero. We wish that a note had been added to inform us from what ancient author Barère quoted. In the course of our own small reading among the Greek and Latin writers, we have not happened to fall in with trees of liberty and watering-pots full of blood; nor can we, such is our ignorance of classical antiquity, even imagine an Attic or Roman orator employing imagery of that sort. In plain words, when Barère talked about an ancient author, he was lying, as he generally was when he asserted any fact, great or small. Why he lied on this occasion we cannot guess, unless indeed it was to keep his hand in.

It is not improbable that, but for one circumstance, Barère would, like most of those with whom he ordinarily acted, have voted for the appeal to the people and for the respite. But, just before the commencement of the trial, papers had been discovered which proved that, while a member of the National Assembly, he had been in communication with the Court respecting his Reports on the Woods and Forests. He was acquitted of all criminality by the Convention; but the fiercer Republicans considered him as a tool of the fallen monarch; and this reproach was long repeated in the journal of Marat, and in the speeches at the Jacobin club. It was natural that a man like Barère should,

under such circumstances, try to distinguish himself among the crowd of regicides by peculiar ferocity. It was because he had been a royalist that he was one of the foremost in shedding blood.

The King was no more. The leading Girondists had, by their conduct towards him, lowered their character in the eyes both of friends and foes. They still, however, maintained the contest against the Mountain, called for vengeance on the assassins of September, and protested against the anarchical and sanguinary doctrines of Marat. For a time they seemed likely to prevail. As publicists and orators they had no rivals in the Convention. They had with them, beyond all doubt, the great majority both of the deputies and of the French nation. These advantages, it should seem, ought to have decided the event of the struggle. But the opposite party had compensating advantages of a different kind. The chiefs of the Mountain, though not eminently distinguished by eloquence or knowledge, had great audacity, activity, and determination. The Convention and France were against them; but the mob of Paris, the clubs of Paris, and the municipal government of Paris, were on their side.

The policy of the Jacobins, in this situation, was to subject France to an aristocracy infinitely worse than that aristocracy which had emigrated with the Count of Artois — to an aristocracy not of birth, not of wealth, not of education but of mere locality. They would not hear of privileged orders; but they wished to have a privileged city. That twenty-five millions of Frenchmen should be ruled by a hundred thousand gentlemen and clergymen, was insufferable; but that twenty-five millions of Frenchmen should be ruled by a hundred thousand Parisians, was as it should be. The qualification of a member of the new oligarchy was simply

that he should live near the hall where the Convention met, and should be able to squeeze himself daily into the gallery during a debate, and now and then to attend with a pike for the purpose of blockading the doors. It was quite agreeable to the maxims of the Mountain, that a score of draymen from Santerre's brewery, or of devils from Hébert's printing-house, should be permitted to drown the voices of men commissioned to speak the sense of such cities as Marseilles, Bordeaux, and Lyons; and that a rabble of half-naked porters from the Faubourg St. Antoine, should have power to annul decrees for which the representatives of fifty or sixty departments had voted. It was necessary to find some pretext for so odious and absurd a tyranny. Such a pretext was found. To the old phrases of liberty and equality were added the sonorous watch-words, unity and indivisibility. A new crime was invented, and called by the name of federalism. The object of the Girondists, it was asserted, was to break up the great nation into little independent commonwealths, bound together only by a league like that which connects the Swiss cantons or the United States of America. The great obstacle in the way of this pernicious design was the influence of Paris. To strengthen the influence of Paris ought therefore to be the chief object of every patriot.

The accusation brought against the leaders of the Girondist party was a mere calumny. They were undoubtedly desirous to prevent the capital from domineering over the republic, and would gladly have seen the Convention removed for a time to some provincial town, or placed under the protection of a trusty guard, which might have overawed the Parisian mob; but there is not the slightest reason to suspect them of any design against the unity of the state. Barère, however, really was a federalist, and, we are inclined to believe, the only federalist in the Convention. As

far as a man so unstable and servile can be said to have felt any preference for any form of government, he felt a preference for federal government. He was born under the Pyrenees; he was a Gascon of the Gascons, one of a people strongly distinguished by intellectual and moral character, by manners, by modes of speech, by accent, and by physiognomy, from the French of the Seine and of the Loire; and he had many of the peculiarities of the race to which he belonged. When he first left his own province he had attained his thirty-fourth year, and had acquired a high local reputation for eloquence and literature. He had then visited Paris for the first time. He had found himself in a new world. His feelings were those of a banished man. It is clear also that he had been by no means without his share of the small disappointments and humiliations so often experienced by men of letters who, elated by provincial applause, venture to display their powers before the fastidious critics of a capital. On the other hand, whenever he revisited the mountains among which he had been born, he found himself an object of general admiration. His dislike of Paris, and his partiality to his native district, were therefore as strong and durable as any sentiments of a mind like his could be. He long continued to maintain, that the ascendency of one great city was the bane of France; that the superiority of taste and intelligence which it was the fashion to ascribe to the inhabitants of that city were wholly imaginary; and that the nation would never enjoy a really good government till the Alsatian people, the people of Bearn, the people of Provence, should have each an independent existence, and laws suited to its own tastes and habits. These communities he proposed to unite by a tie similar to that which binds together the grave Puritans of Connecticut, and the dissolute slave-drivers of New Orleans. To Paris he was unwilling to grant even the rank which

Washington holds in the United States. He thought it desirable that the congress of the French federation should have no fixed place of meeting, but should sit sometimes at Rouen, sometimes at Bordeaux, sometimes at his own Toulouse.

Animated by such feelings, he was, till the close of May 1793, a Girondist, if not an ultra-Girondist. He exclaimed against those impure and bloodthirsty men who wished to make the public danger a pretext for cruelty and rapine. "Peril," he said, "could be no excuse for crime. It is when the wind blows hard, and the waves run high, that the anchor is most needed; it is when a revolution is raging, that the great laws of morality are most necessary to the safety of a state." Of Marat he spoke with abhorrence and contempt; of the municipal authorities of Paris with just severity. He loudly complained that there were Frenchmen who paid to the Mountain that homage which was due to the Convention alone. When the establishment of the Revolutionary Tribunal was first proposed, he joined himself to Vergniaud and Buzot, who strongly objected to that odious measure. "It cannot be," exclaimed Barère, "that men really attached to liberty will imitate the most frightful excesses of despotism!" He proved to the Convention, after his fashion, out of Sallust, that such arbitrary courts may indeed, for a time, be severe only on real criminals, but must inevitably degenerate into instruments of private cupidity and revenge. When, on the tenth of March, the worst part of the population of Paris made the first unsuccessful attempt to destroy the Girondists, Barère eagerly called for vigorous measures of repression and punishment. On the second of April, another attempt of the Jacobins of Paris to usurp supreme dominion over the republic, was brought to the knowledge of the Convention; and again Barère spoke

with warmth against the new tyranny which afflicted France, and declared that the people of the departments would never crouch beneath the tyranny of one ambitious city. He even proposed a resolution to the effect, that the Convention would exert against the demagogues of the capital the same energy which had been exerted against the tyrant Louis. We are assured that, in private as in public, he at this time uniformly spoke with strong aversion of the Mountain.

His apparent zeal for the cause of humanity and order had its reward. Early in April came the tidings of Dumouriez's defection. This was a heavy blow to the Girondists. Dumouriez was their general. His victories had thrown a lustre on the whole party; his army, it had been hoped, would, in the worst event, protect the deputies of the nation against the ragged pikemen of the garrets of Paris. He was now a deserter and an exile; and those who had lately placed their chief reliance on his support were compelled to join with their deadliest enemies in execrating his treason. At this perilous conjuncture, it was resolved to appoint a Committee of Public Safety, and to arm that committee with powers, small indeed when compared with those which it afterwards drew to itself, but still great and formidable. The moderate party, regarding Barère as a representative of their feelings and opinions, elected him a member. In his new situation he soon began to make himself useful. He brought to the deliberations of the Committee, not indeed the knowledge or the ability of a great statesman, but a tongue and a pen which, if others would only supply ideas, never paused for want of words. His mind was a mere organ of communication between other minds. It originated nothing; it retained nothing; but it transmitted every thing. The post assigned to him by his colleagues was not really of the highest importance; but it was prominent, and drew the attention of all Europe. When a great measure

was to be brought forward, when an account was to be rendered of an important event, he was generally the mouthpiece of the administration. He was therefore not unnaturally considered, by persons who lived at a distance from the seat of government, and above all by foreigners who, while the war raged, knew France only from Journals, as the head of that administration of which, in truth, he was only the secretary and the spokesman. The author of the History of Europe, in our own Annual Registers, appears to have been completely under this delusion.

The conflict between the hostile parties was meanwhile fast approaching to a crisis. The temper of Paris grew daily fiercer and fiercer. Delegates appointed by thirty-five of the forty-eight wards of the city appeared at the bar of the Convention, and demanded that Vergniaud, Brissot, Guadet, Gensonné, Barbaroux, Buzot, Pétion, Louvet, and many other deputies, should be expelled. This demand was disapproved by at least three-fourths of the Assembly, and, when known in the departments, called forth a general cry of indignation. Bordeaux declared that it would stand by its representatives, and would, if necessary, defend them by the sword against the tyranny of Paris. Lyons and Marseilles were animated by a similar spirit. These manifestations of public opinion gave courage to the majority of the Convention. Thanks were voted to the people of Bordeaux for their patriotic declaration, and a commission consisting of twelve members was appointed for the purpose of investigating the conduct of the municipal authorities of Paris; and was empowered to place under arrest such persons as should appear to have been concerned in any plot against the authority of the Convention. This measure was adopted on the motion of Barère.

A few days of stormy excitement and profound anxiety followed; and then came the crash. On the thirty-first of May the mob of Paris rose; the palace of the Tuileries was besieged by a vast array of pikes; the majority of the deputies, after vain struggles and remonstrances, yielded to violence, and suffered the Mountain to carry a decree for the suspension and arrest of the deputies whom the wards of the capital had accused.

During this contest, Barère had been tossed backwards and forwards between the two raging factions. His feelings, languid and unsteady as they always were, drew him to the Girondists; but he was awed by the vigour and determination of the Mountain. At one moment he held high and firm language, complained that the Convention was not free, and protested against the validity of any vote passed under coercion. At another moment he proposed to conciliate the Parisians by abolishing that commission of twelve which he had himself proposed only a few days before; and himself drew up a paper condemning the very measures which had been adopted at his own instance, and eulogizing the public spirit of the insurgents. To do him justice, it was not without some symptoms of shame that he read this document from the tribune, where he had so often expressed very different sentiments. It is said that, at some passages, he was even seen to blush. It may have been so; he was still in his noviciate of infamy.

Some days later he proposed that hostages for the personal safety of the accused deputies should be sent to the departments, and offered to be himself one of those hostages. Nor do we in the least doubt that the offer was sincere. He would, we firmly believe, have thought himself far safer at Bordeaux or Marseilles than at Paris. His proposition, however, was

not carried into effect; and he remained in the power of the victorious Mountain.

This was the great crisis of his life. Hitherto he had done nothing inexpiable, nothing which marked him out as a much worse man than most of his colleagues in the Convention. His voice had generally been on the side of moderate measures. Had he bravely cast in his lot with the Girondists, and suffered with them, he would, like them, have had a not dishonourable place in history. Had he, like the great body of deputies who meant well, but who had not the courage to expose themselves to martyrdom, crouched quietly under the dominion of the triumphant minority, and suffered every motion of Robespierre and Billaud to pass unopposed, he would have incurred no peculiar ignominy. But it is probable that this course was not open to him. He had been too prominent among the adversaries of the Mountain, to be admitted to quarter without making some atonement. It was necessary that, if he hoped to find pardon from his new lords, he should not be merely a silent and passive slave. What passed in private between him and them cannot be accurately related; but the result was soon apparent. The Committee of Public Safety was renewed. Several of the fiercest of the dominant faction, Couthon for example, and St. Just, were substituted for more moderate politicians; but Barère was suffered to retain his seat at the Board.

The indulgence with which he was treated excited the murmurs of some stern and ardent zealots. Marat, in the very last words that he wrote, words not published till the dagger of Charlotte Corday had avenged France and mankind, complained that a man who had no principles, who was always on the side of the strongest, who had been a royalist, and who was ready, in case of a turn of fortune, to be a royalist again, should be entrusted with an important share

in the administration. * But the chiefs of the Mountain judged more correctly. They knew indeed, as well as Marat, that Barère was a man utterly without faith or steadiness, that, if he could be said to have any political leaning, his leaning was not towards them; that he felt for the Girondist party that faint and wavering sort of preference of which alone his nature was susceptible; and that, if he had been at liberty to make his choice, he would rather have murdered Robespierre and Danton, than Vergniaud and Gensonné. But they justly appreciated that levity which made him incapable alike of earnest love and of earnest hatred, and that meanness which made it necessary to him to have a master. In truth, what the planters of Carolina and Louisiana say of black men with flat noses and woolly hair, was strictly true of Barère. The curse of Canaan was upon him. He was born a slave. Baseness was an instinct in him. The impulse which drove him from a party in adversity to a party in prosperity, was as irresistible as that which drives the cuckoo and the swallow towards the sun when the dark and cold months are approaching. The law which doomed him to be the humble attendant of stronger spirits resembled the law which binds the pilot-fish to the shark. "Ken ye," said a shrewd Scotch lord, who was asked his opinion of James the First; "Ken ye a John Ape? If I have Jacko by the collar, I can make him bite you; but if you have Jacko, you can make him bite me." Just such a creature was Barère. In the hands of the Girondists he would have been eager to proscribe the Jacobins; he was just as ready, in the gripe of the Jacobins, to proscribe the Girondists. On the fidelity of such a man, the heads of the Mountain could not, of course,

* See the *Publiciste* of the 14th of July 1793. Marat was stabbed on the evening of the 13th.

reckon; but they valued their conquest as the very easy and not very delicate lover in Congreve's lively song valued the conquest of a prostitute of a different kind. Barère was, like Chloe, false and common; but he was, like Chloe, constant while possessed; and they asked no more. They needed a service which he was perfectly competent to perform. Destitute as he was of all the talents both of an active and of a speculative statesman, he could with great facility draw up a report, or make a speech on any subject and on any side. If other people would furnish facts and thoughts, he could always furnish phrases; and this talent was absolutely at the command of his owners for the time being. Nor had he excited any angry passion among those to whom he had hitherto been opposed. They felt no more hatred to him than they felt to the horses which dragged the cannon of the Duke of Brunswick and of the Prince of Saxe-Coburg. The horses had only done according to their kind, and would, if they fell into the hands of the French, drag with equal vigour and equal docility the guns of the republic, and therefore ought not merely to be spared, but to be well fed and curried. So was it with Barère. He was of a nature so low, that it might be doubted whether he could properly be an object of the hostility of reasonable beings. He had not been an enemy; he was not now a friend. But he had been an annoyance; and he would now be a help.

But though the heads of the Mountain pardoned this man, and admitted him into partnership with themselves, it was not without exacting pledges such as made it impossible for him, false and fickle as he was, ever again to find admission into the ranks which he had deserted. That was truly a terrible sacrament by which they admitted the apostate into their communion. They demanded of him that he should himself take the most prominent part in murdering his old friends.

To refuse was as much as his life was worth. But what is life worth when it is only one long agony of remorse and shame? These, however, are feelings of which it is idle to talk, when we are considering the conduct of such a man as Barère. He undertook the task, mounted the tribune, and told the Convention that the time was come for taking the stern attitude of justice, and for striking at all conspirators without distinction. He then moved that Buzot, Barbaroux, Pétion, and thirteen other deputies, should be placed out of the pale of the law, or, in other words, beheaded without a trial; and that Vergniaud, Guadet, Gensonné, and six others, should be impeached. The motion was carried without debate.

We have already seen with what effrontery Barère has denied, in these Memoirs, that he took any part against the Girondists. This denial, we think, was the only thing wanting to make his infamy complete. The most impudent of all lies was a fit companion for the foulest of all murders.

Barère, however, had not yet earned his pardon. The Jacobin party contained one gang which, even in that party, was preeminent in every mean and every savage vice, a gang so low-minded and so inhuman, that, compared with them, Robespierre might be called magnanimous and merciful. Of these wretches Hébert was perhaps the best representative. His favourite amusement was to torment and insult the miserable remains of that great family which, having ruled France during eight hundred years, had now become an object of pity to the humblest artisan or peasant. The influence of this man, and of men like him, induced the Committee of Public Safety to determine that Marie Antoinette should be sent to the scaffold. Barère was again summoned to his duty. Only four days after he had proposed the decrees against the Girondist deputies he again mounted the tribune, in order to

move that the Queen should be brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal. He was improving fast in the society of his new allies. When he asked for the heads of Vergniaud and Pétion, he had spoken like a man who had some slight sense of his own guilt and degradation; he had said little, and that little had not been violent. The office of expatiating on the guilt of his old friends he had left to Saint Just. Very different was Barère's second appearance in the character of an accuser. He now cried out for blood in the eager tones of the true and burning thirst, and raved against the Austrian woman with the virulence, natural to a coward who finds himself at liberty to outrage that which he has feared and envied. We have already exposed the shameless mendacity with which, in these Memoirs, he attempts to throw the blame of his own guilt on the guiltless.

On the day on which the fallen Queen was dragged, already more than half dead, to her doom, Barère regaled Robespierre and some other Jacobins at a tavern. Robespierre's acceptance of the invitation caused some surprise to those who knew how long and how bitterly it was his nature to hate. "Robespierre of the party!" muttered Saint Just. "Barère is the only man whom Robespierre has forgiven." We have an account of this singular repast from one of the guests. Robespierre condemned the senseless brutality with which Hébert had conducted the proceedings against the Austrian woman, and, in talking on that subject, became so much excited that he broke his plate in the violence of his gesticulation. Barère exclaimed that the guillotine had cut a diplomatic knot which it might have been difficult to untie. In the intervals between the Beaune and the Champagne, between the ragout of thrushes and the partridge with truffles, he fervently preached his new political creed. "The vessel of the revolution," he said, "can float into port only

on waves of blood. We must begin with the members of the National Assembly and of the Legislative Assembly. That rubbish must be swept away."

As he talked at table he talked in the Convention. His peculiar style of oratory was now formed. It was not altogether without ingenuity and liveliness. But, in any other age or country, it would have been thought unfit for the deliberations of a grave assembly, and still more unfit for state papers. It might, perhaps, succeed at a meeting of a Protestant Association in Exeter Hall, at a Repeal dinner in Ireland, after men had well drunk, or in an American oration on the fourth of July. No legislative body would now endure it. But in France, during the reign of the Convention, the old laws of composition were held in as much contempt as the old government or the old creed. Correct and noble diction belonged, like the etiquette of Versailles and the solemnities of Notre Dame, to an age which had passed away. Just as a swarm of ephemeral constitutions, democratic, directorial, and consular, sprang from the decay of the ancient monarchy; just as a swarm of new superstitions, the worship of the Goddess of Reason, and the fooleries of the Theophilanthropists, sprang from the decay of the ancient Church; even so, out of the decay of the ancient French eloquence, sprang new fashions of eloquence, for the understanding of which new grammars and dictionaries were necessary. The same innovating spirit which altered the common phrases of salutation, which turned hundreds of Johns and Peters into Scævolas and Aristogitons, and which expelled Sunday and Monday, January and February, Lady-day and Christmas, from the calendar, in order to substitute Decadi and Primidi, Nivose and Pluviose, Feasts of Opinion and Feasts of the Supreme Being, changed all the forms of official correspondence. For the calm, guarded, and sternly courteous

language which governments had long been accustomed to employ, were substituted puns, interjections, Ossianic rants, rhetoric worthy only of a schoolboy, scurrility worthy only of a fishwife. Of the phraseology which was now thought to be peculiarly well suited to a Report or a Manifesto, Barère had a greater command than any man of his time; and, during the short and sharp paroxysm of the revolutionary delirium, passed for a great orator. When the fit was over, he was considered as what he really was, a man of quick apprehension and fluent elocution, with no originality, with little information, and with a taste as bad as his heart. His Reports were popularly called Carmagnoles. A few months ago,* we should have had some difficulty in conveying to an English reader an exact notion of the state papers to which this appellation was given. Fortunately a noble and distinguished person, whom her Majesty's Ministers have thought qualified to fill the most important post in the empire, has made our task easy. Whoever has read Lord Ellenborough's proclamations is able to form a complete idea of a Carmagnole.

The effect which Barère's discourses at one time produced is not to be wholly attributed to the perversion of the national taste. The occasions on which he rose were frequently such as would have secured to the worst speaker a favourable hearing. When any military advantage had been gained, he was generally deputed by the Committee of Public Safety to announce the good news. The hall resounded with applause as he mounted the tribune, holding the despatches in his hand. Deputies and strangers listened with delight while he told them that victory was the order of the day; that the guineas of Pitt had been vainly lavished to hire machines six feet high, carrying guns; that the flight of the English leopard deserved to be celebrated by Tyrtæus; and that the saltpetre

* This Essay was first published in April 1844.

dug out of the cellars of Paris had been turned into thunder, which would crush the Titan brethren, George and Francis.

Meanwhile the trial of the accused Girondists, who were under arrest at Paris, came on. They flattered themselves with a vain hope of escape. They placed some reliance on their innocence, and some reliance on their eloquence. They thought that shame would suffice to restrain any man, however violent and cruel, from publicly committing the flagrant iniquity of condemning them to death. The Revolutionary Tribunal was new to its functions. No member of the Convention had yet been executed; and it was probable that the boldest Jacobin would shrink from being the first to violate the sanctity which was supposed to belong to the representatives of the people.

The proceedings lasted some days. Gensonné and Brissot defended themselves with great ability and presence of mind against the vile Hébert and Chaumette, who appeared as accusers. The eloquent voice of Vergniaud was heard for the last time. He pleaded his own cause, and that of his friends, with such force of reason and elevation of sentiment that a murmur of pity and admiration rose from the audience. Nay, the court itself, not yet accustomed to riot in daily carnage, showed signs of emotion. The sitting was adjourned, and a rumour went forth that there would be an acquittal. The Jacobins met, breathing vengeance. Robespierre undertook to be their organ. He rose on the following day in the Convention, and proposed a decree of such atrocity, that even among the acts of that year it can hardly be paralleled. By this decree the tribunal was empowered to cut short the defence of the prisoners, to pronounce the case clear, and to pass immediate judgment. One deputy made a faint opposition. Barère instantly sprang up to support Robespierre — Barère, the federalist; Barère, the author of that Commission

of Twelve which was among the chief causes of the hatred borne by Paris to the Girondists; Barère, who in these Memoirs denies that he ever took any part against the Girondists; Barère, who has the effrontery to declare that he greatly loved and esteemed Vergniaud. The decree was passed; and the tribunal, without suffering the prisoners to conclude what they had to say, pronounced them guilty.

The following day was the saddest in the sad history of the Revolution. The sufferers were so innocent, so brave, so eloquent, so accomplished, so young. Some of them were graceful and handsome youths of six or seven and twenty. Vergniaud and Gensonné were little more than thirty. They had been only a few months engaged in public affairs. In a few months the fame of their genius had filled Europe; and they were to die for no crime but this, that they had wished to combine order, justice, and mercy with freedom. Their great fault was want of courage. We mean want of political courage — of that courage which is proof to clamour and obloquy, and which meets great emergencies by daring and decisive measures. Alas! they had but too good an opportunity of proving, that they did not want courage to endure with manly cheerfulness the worst that could be inflicted by such tyrants as St. Just, and such slaves as Barère.

They were not the only victims of the noble cause. Madame Roland followed them to the scaffold with a spirit as heroic as their own. Her husband was in a safe hiding-place, but could not bear to survive her. His body was found on the high-road, near Rouen. He had fallen on his sword. Condorcet swallowed opium. At Bordeaux, the steel fell on the necks of the bold and quick-witted Guadet, and of Barbaroux, the chief of those enthusiasts from the Rhone whose valour, in the great crisis of the tenth of August, had turned back the tide of battle from the Louvre to the Tuileries. In a field

near the Garonne was found all that the wolves had left of Pétion, once honoured, greatly indeed beyond his deserts, as the model of republican virtue. We are far from regarding even the best of the Girondists with unmixed admiration; but history owes to them this honourable testimony, that, being free to choose whether they would be oppressors or victims, they deliberately and firmly resolved rather to suffer injustice than to inflict it.

And now began that strange period known by the name of the Reign of Terror. The Jacobins had prevailed. This was their hour, and the power of darkness. The Convention was subjugated, and reduced to profound silence on the highest questions of state. The sovereignty passed to the Committee of Public Safety. To the edicts framed by that Committee, the representative assembly did not venture to offer even the species of opposition which the ancient Parliament had frequently offered to the mandates of the ancient Kings. Six persons held the chief power in the small cabinet which now domineered over France — Robespierre, St. Just, Couthon, Collot, Billaud, and Barère.

To some of these men, and of those who adhered to them, it is due to say, that the fanaticism which had emancipated them from the restraints of justice and compassion, had emancipated them also from the dominion of vulgar cupidity and of vulgar fear; that, while hardly knowing where to find an assignat of a few francs to pay for a dinner, they expended with strict integrity the immense revenue which they collected by every art of rapine; and that they were ready, in support of their cause, to mount the scaffold with as much indifference as they showed when they signed the death-warrants of aristocrats and priests. But no great party can be composed of such materials as these. It is the inevitable law, that such zealots as we have described shall collect around them a mul-

titude of slaves, of cowards, and of libertines, whose savage tempers and licentious appetites, withheld only by the dread of law and magistracy from the worst excesses, are called into full activity by the hope of impunity. A faction which, from whatever motive, relaxes the great laws of morality, is certain to be joined by the most immoral part of the community. This has been repeatedly proved in religious wars. The war of the Holy Sepulchre, the Albigensian war, the Huguenot war, the Thirty Years' war, all originated in pious zeal. That zeal inflamed the champions of the church to such a point, that they regarded all generosity to the vanquished as a sinful weakness. The infidel, the heretic, was to be run down like a mad dog. No outrage committed by the Catholic warrior on the miscreant enemy could deserve punishment. As soon as it was known that boundless license was thus given to barbarity and dissoluteness, thousands of wretches who cared nothing for the sacred cause, but who were eager to be exempted from the police of peaceful cities, and the discipline of well-governed camps, flocked to the standard of the faith. The men who had set up that standard were sincere, chaste, regardless of lucre, and perhaps, where only themselves were concerned, not unforgiving; but round that standard were assembled such gangs of rogues, ravishers, plunderers, and ferocious bravoes, as were scarcely ever found under the flag of any state engaged in a mere temporal quarrel. In a very similar way was the Jacobin party composed. There was a small nucleus of enthusiasts; round that nucleus was gathered a vast mass of ignoble depravity; and in all that mass, there was nothing so depraved and so ignoble as Barère.

Then came those days, when the most barbarous of all codes was administered by the most barbarous of all tribunals; when no man could greet his neighbours, or say his

prayers, or dress his hair, without danger of committing a capital crime; when spies lurked in every corner; when the guillotine was long and hard at work every morning; when the jails were filled as close as the hold of a slave-ship; when the gutters ran foaming with blood into the Seine; when it was death to be great-niece of a captain of the royal guards, or half-brother of a doctor of the Sorbonne, to express a doubt whether assignats would not fall, to hint that the English had been victorious in the action of the First of June, to have a copy of one of Burke's pamphlets locked up in a desk, to laugh at a Jacobin for taking the name of Cassius or Timoleon, or to call the Fifth Sans-culottide by its old superstitious name of St. Matthew's Day. While the daily waggon-loads of victims were carried to their doom through the streets of Paris, the Proconsuls whom the sovereign Committee had sent forth to the departments, reveled in an extravagance of cruelty unknown even in the capital. The knife of the deadly machine rose and fell too slow for their work of slaughter. Long rows of captives were mowed down with grape-shot. Holes were made in the bottom of crowded barges. Lyons was turned into a desert. At Arras even the cruel mercy of a speedy death was denied to the prisoners. All down the Loire, from Saumur to the sea, great flocks of crows and kites feasted on naked corpses, twined together in hideous embraces. No mercy was shown to sex or age. The number of young lads and of girls of seventeen who were murdered by that execrable government, is to be reckoned by hundreds. Babies torn from the breast were tossed from pike to pike along the Jacobin ranks. One champion of liberty had his pockets well stuffed with ears. Another swaggered about with the finger of a little child in his hat. A few months had sufficed to degrade France below the level of New Zealand.

It is absurd to say, that any amount of public danger can justify a system like this, we do not say on Christian principles, we do not say on the principles of a high morality, but even on principles of Machiavelian policy. It is true that great emergencies call for activity and vigilance; it is true that they justify severity which, in ordinary times, would deserve the name of cruelty. But indiscriminate severity can never, under any circumstances, be useful. It is plain that the whole efficacy of punishment depends on the care with which the guilty are distinguished. Punishment which strikes the guilty and the innocent promiscuously operates merely like a pestilence or a great convulsion of nature, and has no more tendency to prevent offences, than the cholera, or an earthquake like that of Lisbon, would have. The energy for which the Jacobin administration is praised was merely the energy of the Malay who maddens himself with opium, draws his knife, and runs a-muck through the streets, slashing right and left at friends and foes. Such has never been the energy of truly great rulers; of Elizabeth, for example, of Oliver, or of Frederick. They were not, indeed, scrupulous. But, had they been less scrupulous than they were, the strength and amplitude of their minds would have preserved them from crimes, such as those which the small men of the Committee of Public Safety took for daring strokes of policy. The great Queen who so long held her own against foreign and domestic enemies, against temporal and spiritual arms; the great Protector who governed with more than regal power, in despite both of royalists and republicans; the great King who, with a beaten army and an exhausted treasury, defended his little dominions to the last against the united efforts of Russia, Austria, and France; with what scorn would they have heard that it was impossible for them to strike a salutary terror into the disaffected,

without sending school-boys and school-girls to death by cart-loads and boat-loads!

The popular notion is, we believe, that the leading Terrorists were wicked men, but, at the same time, great men. We can see nothing great about them but their wickedness. That their policy was daringly original is a vulgar error. Their policy is as old as the oldest accounts which we have of human misgovernment. It seemed new in France, and in the eighteenth century, only because it had been long disused, for excellent reasons, by the enlightened part of mankind. But it has always prevailed, and still prevails, in savage and half savage nations, and is the chief cause which prevents such nations from making advances towards civilisation. Thousands of deys, of beys, of pachas, of rajahs, of nabobs, have shown themselves as great masters of statecraft as the members of the Commitee of Public Safety. Djezzar, we imagine, was superior to any of them in their own line. In fact, there is not a petty tyrant in Asia or Africa so dull or so unlearned as not to be fully qualified for the business of Jacobin police and Jacobin finance. To behead people by scores without caring whether they are guilty or innocent; to wring money out of the rich by the help of jailers and executioners; to rob the public creditor, and to put him to death if he remonstrates; to take loaves by force out of the bakers' shops; to clothe and mount soldiers by seizing on one man's wool and linen, and on another man's horses and saddles, without compensation, is of all modes of governing the simplest and most obvious. Of its morality we at present say nothing. But surely it requires no capacity beyond that of a barbarian or a child. By means like those which we have described, the Committee of Public Safety undoubtedly succeeded, for a short time, in enforcing profound submission, and in raising immense funds. But to enforce submission by

butchery, and to raise funds by spoliation, is not statesmanship. The real statesman is he who, in troubled times, keeps down the turbulent without unnecessarily harassing the well-affected; and who, when great pecuniary resources are needed, provides for the public exigencies without violating the security of property, and drying up the sources of future prosperity. Such a statesman, we are confident, might, in 1793, have preserved the independence of France, without shedding a drop of innocent blood, without plundering a single warehouse. Unhappily, the Republic was subject to men who were mere demagogues, and in no sense statesmen. They could declaim at a club. They could lead a rabble to mischief. But they had no skill to conduct the affairs of an empire. The want of skill they supplied for a time by atrocity and blind violence. For legislative ability, fiscal ability, military ability, diplomatic ability, they had one substitute, the guillotine. Indeed their exceeding ignorance, and the barrenness of their invention, are the best excuse for their murders and robberies. We really believe that they would not have cut so many throats, and picked so many pockets, if they had known how to govern in any other way.

That, under their administration, the war against the European Coalition was successfully conducted, is true. But that war had been successfully conducted before their elevation, and continued to be successfully conducted after their fall. Terror was not the order of the day when Brussels opened its gates to Dumouriez. Terror had ceased to be the order of the day when Piedmont and Lombardy were conquered by Bonaparte. The truth is, that France was saved, not by the Committee of Public Safety, but by the energy, patriotism, and valour of the French people. Those high qualities were victorious in spite of the incapacity of

rulers whose administration was a tissue, not merely of crimes, but of blunders.

We have not time to tell how the leaders of the savage faction at length began to avenge mankind on each other; how the craven Hébert was dragged wailing and trembling to his doom; how the nobler Danton, moved by a late repentance, strove in vain to repair the evil which he had wrought, and half redeemed the great crime of September, by manfully encountering death in the cause of mercy.

Our business is with Barère. In all those things he was not only consenting, but eagerly and joyously forward. Not merely was he one of the guilty administration. He was the man to whom was especially assigned the office of proposing and defending outrages on justice and humanity, and of furnishing to atrocious schemes an appropriate garb of atrocious rodomontade. Barère first proclaimed from the tribune of the Convention, that terror must be the order of the day. It was by Barère that the Revolutionary Tribunal of Paris was provided with the aid of a public accuser worthy of such a court, the infamous Fouquier Tinville. It was Barère who, when one of the old members of the National Assembly had been absolved by the Revolutionary Tribunal, gave orders that a fresh jury should be summoned. "Acquit one of the National Assembly!" he cried. "The tribunal is turning against the Revolution." It is unnecessary to say that the prisoner's head was soon in the basket. It was Barère who moved that the city of Lyons should be destroyed. "Let the plough," he cried from the tribune, "pass over her. Let her name cease to exist. The rebels are conquered; but are they all exterminated? No weakness. No mercy. Let every one be smitten. Two words will suffice to tell the whole. Lyons made war on liberty; Lyons is

no more." When Toulon was taken Barère came forward to announce the event. "The conquest," said the apostate Brissotin, "won by the Mountain over the Brissotins, must be commemorated by a mark set on the place where Toulon once stood. The national thunder must crush the house of every trader in the town." When Camille Desmoulins, long distinguished among the republicans by zeal and ability, dared to raise his eloquent voice against the Reign of Terror, and to point out the close analogy between the government which then oppressed France and the government of the worst of the Cæsars, Barère rose to complain of the weak compassion which tried to revive the hopes of the aristocracy. "Whoever," he said, "is nobly born, is a man to be suspected. Every priest, every frequenter of the old court, every lawyer, every banker, is a man to be suspected. Every person who grumbles at the course which the Revolution takes, is a man to be suspected. There are whole castes already tried and condemned. There are callings which carry their doom with them. There are relations of blood which the law regards with an evil eye. Republicans of France!" yelled the renegade Girondist, the old enemy of the Mountain — "Republicans of France! the Brissotins led you by gentle means to slavery. The Mountain leads you by strong measures to freedom. Oh! who can count the evils which a false compassion may produce?" When the friends of Danton mustered courage to express a wish that the Convention would at least hear him, in his own defence, before it sent him to certain death, the voice of Barère was the loudest in opposition to their prayer. When the crimes of Lebon, one of the worst, if not the very worst, of the vicegerents of the Committee of Public Safety, had so maddened the people of the Department of the North, that they resorted to the desperate expedient of imploring

the protection of the Convention, Barère pleaded the cause of the accused tyrant, and threatened the petitioners with the utmost vengeance of the government. "These charges," he said, "have been suggested by wily aristocrats. The man who crushes the enemies of the people, though he may be hurried by his zeal into some excesses, can never be a proper object of censure. The proceedings of Lebon may have been a little harsh as to form." One of the small irregularities thus gently censured was this: Lebon kept a wretched man a quarter of an hour under the knife of the guillotine, in order to torment him, by reading to him, before he was dispatched, a letter, the contents of which were supposed to be such as would aggravate even the bitterness of death. "But what," proceeded Barère, "is not permitted to the hatred of a republican against aristocracy? How many generous sentiments atone for what may perhaps seem acrimonious in the prosecution of public enemies? Revolutionary measures are always to be spoken of with respect. Liberty is a virgin whose veil it is not lawful to lift."

After this, it would be idle to dwell on facts which would indeed, of themselves, suffice to render a name infamous, but which make no perceptible addition to the great infamy of Barère. It would be idle, for example, to relate how he, a man of letters, a member of an Academy of Inscriptions, was foremost in that war against learning, art, and history which disgraced the Jacobin government; how he recommended a general conflagration of libraries; how he proclaimed that all records of events anterior to the Revolution ought to be destroyed; how he laid waste the abbey of St. Denis, pulled down monuments consecrated by the veneration of ages, and scattered on the wind the dust of ancient Kings. He was, in truth, seldom so well employed as when

he turned for a moment from making war on the living to make war on the dead.

Equally idle would it be to dilate on his sensual excesses. That in Barère, as in the whole breed of Neros, Caligulas, and Domitians whom he resembled, voluptuousness was mingled with cruelty; that he withdrew, twice in every decade, from the work of blood to the smiling gardens of Clichy, and there forgot public cares in the madness of wine, and in the arms of courtesans, has often been repeated. M. Hippolyte Carnot does not altogether deny the truth of these stories, but justly observes that Barère's dissipation was not carried to such a point as to interfere with his industry. Nothing can be more true. Barère was by no means so much addicted to debauchery as to neglect the work of murder. It was his boast that, even during his hours of recreation, he cut out work for the Revolutionary Tribunal. To those who expressed a fear that his exertions would hurt his health, he gaily answered that he was less busy than they thought. "The guillotine," he said, "does all; the guillotine governs." For ourselves, we are much more disposed to look indulgently on the pleasures which he allowed to himself, than on the pain which he inflicted on his neighbours.

> "Atque utinam his potius nugis tota illa dedisset
> Tempora sævitiæ, claras quibus abstulit urbi
> Illustresque animas, impune ac vindice nullo."

An immoderate appetite for sensual gratifications is undoubtedly a blemish on the fame of Henry the Fourth, of Lord Somers, of Mr. Fox. But the vices of honest men are the virtues of Barère.

And now Barère had become a really cruel man. It was from mere pusillanimity that he had perpetrated his first great

crimes. But the whole history of our race proves that the taste for the misery of others is a taste which minds not naturally ferocious may too easily acquire, and which, when once acquired, is as strong as any of the propensities with which we are born. A very few months had sufficed to bring this man into a state of mind in which images of despair, wailing, and death, had an exhilarating effect on him, and inspired him as wine and love inspire men of free and joyous natures. The cart creaking under its daily freight of victims, ancient men, and lads, and fair young girls, the binding of the hands, the thrusting of the head out of the little national sash-window, the crash of the axe, the pool of blood beneath the scaffold, the heads rolling by scores in the panier — these things were to him what Lalage and a cask of Falernian were to Horace, what Rosette and a bottle of iced champagne are to De Béranger. As soon as he began to speak of slaughter, his heart seemed to be enlarged, and his fancy to become unusually fertile of conceits and gasconades. Robespierre, St. Just, and Billaud, whose barbarity was the effect of earnest and gloomy hatred, were, in his view, men who made a toil of a pleasure. Cruelty was no such melancholy business, to be gone about with an austere brow and a whining tone; it was a recreation, fitly accompanied by singing and laughing. In truth, Robespierre and Barère might be well compared to the two renowned hangmen of Louis the Eleventh. They were alike insensible of pity, alike bent on havoc. But, while they murdered, one of them frowned and canted, the other grinned and joked. For our own part, we prefer *Jean qui pleure* to *Jean qui rit.*

In the midst of the funeral gloom which overhung Paris, a gaiety stranger and more ghastly than the horrors of the prison and the scaffold distinguished the dwelling of Barère.

Every morning a crowd of suitors assembled to implore his protection. He came forth in his rich dressing-gown, went round the antechamber, dispensed smiles and promises among the obsequious crowd, addressed himself with peculiar animation to every handsome woman who appeared in the circle, and complimented her in the florid style of Gascony on the bloom of her cheeks and the lustre of her eyes. When he had enjoyed the fear and anxiety of his suppliants he dismissed them, and flung all their memorials unread into the fire. This was the best way, he conceived, to prevent arrears of business from accumulating. Here he was only an imitator. Cardinal Dubois had been in the habit of clearing his table of papers in the same way. Nor was this the only point in which we could point out a resemblance between the worst statesman of the monarchy and the worst statesman of the republic.

Of Barère's peculiar vein of pleasantry a notion may be formed from an anecdote which one of his intimate associates, a juror of the revolutionary tribunal, has related. A courtesan who bore a conspicuous part in the orgies of Clichy, implored Barère to use his power against a head-dress which did not suit her style of face, and which a rival beauty was trying to bring into fashion. One of the magistrates of the capital was summoned, and received the necessary orders. Aristocracy, Barère said, was again rearing its front. These new wigs were counterrevolutionary. He had reason to know that they were made out of the long fair hair of handsome aristocrats who had died by the national chopper. Every lady who adorned herself with the relics of criminals might justly be suspected of incivism. This ridiculous lie imposed on the authorities of Paris. Female citizens were solemnly warned against the obnoxious ringlets, and were left to choose between their head-dresses and their heads. Barère's delight at

the success of this facetious fiction was quite extravagant; he could not tell the story without going into such convulsions of laughter as made his hearers hope that he was about to choke. There was something peculiarly tickling and exhilarating to his mind in this grotesque combination of the frivolous with the horrible, of false locks and curling-irons with spouting arteries and reeking hatchets.

But though Barère succeeded in earning the honourable nicknames of the Witling of Terror, and the Anacreon of the Guillotine, there was one place where it was long remembered to his disadvantage, that he had, for a time, talked the language of humanity and moderation. That place was the Jacobin Club. Even after he had borne the chief part in the massacre of the Girondists, in the murder of the Queen, in the destruction of Lyons, he durst not show himself within that sacred precinct. At one meeting of the society, a member complained that the committee to which the supreme direction of affairs was entrusted, after all the changes which had been made, still contained one man who was not trustworthy. Robespierre, whose influence over the Jacobins was boundless, undertook the defence of his colleague, owned there was some ground for what had been said, but spoke highly of Barère's industry and aptitude for business. This seasonable interposition silenced the accuser; but it was long before the neophyte could venture to appear at the club.

At length a masterpiece of wickedness, unique, we think, even among Barère's great achievements, obtained his full pardon even from that rigid conclave. The insupportable tyranny of the Committee of Public Safety had at length brought the minds of men, and even of women, into a fierce and hard temper, which defied or welcomed death. The life which might be any morning taken away, in consequence of

the whisper of a private enemy, seemed of little value. It was something to die after smiting one of the oppressors; it was something to bequeath to the surviving tyrants a terror not inferior to that which they had themselves inspired. Human nature, hunted and worried to the utmost, now turned furiously to bay. Fouquier Tinville was afraid to walk the streets; a pistol was snapped at Collot D'Herbois; a young girl, animated apparently by the spirit of Charlotte Corday, attempted to obtain an interview with Robespierre. Suspicions arose; she was searched; and two knives were found about her. She was questioned, and spoke of the Jacobin domination with resolute scorn and aversion. It is unnecessary to say that she was sent to the guillotine. Barère declared from the tribune that the cause of these attempts was evident. Pitt and his guineas had done the whole. The English Government had organized a vast system of murder, had armed the hand of Charlotte Corday, and had now, by similar means, attacked two of the most eminent friends of liberty in France. It is needless to say, that these imputations were not only false, but destitute of all show of truth. Nay, they were demonstrably absurd; for the assassins to whom Barère referred rushed on certain death, a sure proof that they were not hirelings. The whole wealth of England would not have bribed any sane person to do what Charlotte Corday did. But when we consider her as an enthusiast, her conduct is perfectly natural. Even those French writers who are childish enough to believe that the English Government contrived the infernal machine, and strangled the Emperor Paul, have fully acquitted Mr. Pitt of all share in the death of Marat and in the attempt on Robespierre. Yet on calumnies so futile as those which we have mentioned, did Barère ground a motion at which all Christendom stood aghast. He proposed a decree that no quarter should be given to any

English or Hanoverian soldier.* His Carmagnole was worthy of the proposition with which it concluded. "That one Englishman should be spared, that for the slaves of George, for the human machines of York, the vocabulary of our armies should contain such a word as generosity, this is what the National Convention cannot endure. War to the death against every English soldier. If last year, at Dunkirk, quarter had been refused to them when they asked it on their knees, if our troops had exterminated them all, instead of suffering them to infest our fortresses by their presence, the English Government would not have renewed its attack on our frontiers this year. It is only the dead man who never comes back. What is this moral pestilence which has introduced into our armies false ideas of humanity? That the English were to be treated with indulgence was the philanthropic notion of the Brissotins; it was the patriotic practice of Dumouriez. But humanity consists in exterminating our enemies. No mercy to the execrable Englishman. Such are the sentiments of the true Frenchman; for he knows that he belongs to a nation revolutionary as nature, powerful as freedom, ardent as the saltpetre which

* M. Hippolyte Carnot does his best to excuse this decree. His abuse of England is merely laughable. England has managed to deal with enemies of a very different sort from either himself or his hero. One disgraceful blunder, however, we think it right to notice.

M. Hippolyte Carnot asserts that a motion similar to that of Barère was made in the English Parliament by the late Lord Fitzwilliam. This assertion is false. We defy M. Hippolyte Carnot to state the date and terms of the motion of which he speaks. We do not accuse him of intentional misrepresentation; but we confidently accuse him of extreme ignorance and temerity. Our readers will be amused to learn on what authority he has ventured to publish such a fable. He quotes, not the Journals of the Lords, not the Parliamentary Debates; but a ranting message of the Executive Directory to the Five Hundred, a message, too, the whole meaning of which he has utterly misunderstood.

she has just torn from the entrails of the earth. Soldiers of liberty, when victory places Englishmen at your mercy, strike! None of them must return to the servile soil of Great Britain; none must pollute the free soil of France."

The Convention, thoroughly tamed and silenced, acquiesced in Barère's motion without debate. And now at last the doors of the Jacobin Club were thrown open to the disciple who had surpassed his masters. He was admitted a member by acclamation, and was soon selected to preside.

For a time he was not without hope that his decree would be carried into full effect. Intelligence arrived from the seat of war of a sharp contest between some French and English troops, in which the Republicans had the advantage, and in which no prisoners had been made. Such things happen occasionally in all wars. Barère, however, attributed the ferocity of this combat to his darling decree, and entertained the Convention with another Carmagnole.

"The Republicans," he said, "saw a division in red uniform at a distance. The red-coats are attacked with the bayonet. Not one of them escapes the blows of the Republicans. All the red-coats have been killed. No mercy, no indulgence, has been shown towards the villains. Not an Englishman whom the Republicans could reach is now living. How many prisoners should you guess that we have made? One single prisoner is the result of this great day."

And now this bad man's craving for blood had become insatiable. The more he quaffed, the more he thirsted. He had begun with the English; but soon he came down with a proposition for new massacres. "All the troops," he said, "of the coalesced tyrants in garrison at Condé, Valenciennes, Le Quesnoy, and Landrecies, ought to be put to the sword

unless they surrender at discretion in twenty-four hours. The English, of course, will be admitted to no capitulation whatever. With the English we have no treaty but death. As to the rest, surrender at discretion in twenty-four hours, or death, these are our conditions. If the slaves resist, let them feel the edge of the sword." And then he waxed facetious. "On these terms the Republic is willing to give them a lesson in the art of war." At that jest, some hearers worthy of such a speaker, set up a laugh. Then he became serious again. "Let the enemy perish," he cried; "I have already said it from this tribune. It is only the dead man who never comes back. Kings will not conspire against us in the grave. Armies will not fight against us when they are annihilated. Let our war with them be a war of extermination. What pity is due to slaves whom the Emperor leads to war under the cane; whom the King of Prussia beats to the shambles with the flat of the sword; and whom the Duke of York makes drunk with rum and gin?" And at the rum and gin the Mountain and the galleries laughed again.

If Barère had been able to effect his purpose, it is difficult to estimate the extent of the calamity which he would have brought on the human race. No government, however averse to cruelty, could, in justice to its own subjects, have given quarter to enemies who gave none. Retaliation would have been, not merely justifiable, but a sacred duty. It would have been necessary for Howe and Nelson to make every French sailor whom they took walk the plank. England has no peculiar reason to dread the introduction of such a system. On the contrary, the operation of Barère's new law of war would have been more unfavourable to his countrymen than to ours; for we believe that, from the beginning to the end of the war, there never was a time at which the number of

French prisoners in England was not greater than the number of English prisoners in France; and so, we apprehend, it will be in all wars while England retains her maritime superiority. Had the murderous decree of the Convention been in force from 1794 to 1815, we are satisfied that, for every Englishman slain by the French, at least three Frenchmen would have been put to the sword by the English. It is, therefore, not as Englishmen, but as members of the great society of mankind, that we speak with indignation and horror of the change which Barère attempted to introduce. The mere slaughter would have been the smallest part of the evil. The butchering of a single unarmed man in cold blood, under an act of the legislature, would have produced more evil than the carnage of ten such fields as Albuera. Public law would have been subverted from the foundations; national enmities would have been inflamed to a degree of rage which happily it is not easy for us to conceive; cordial peace would have been impossible. The moral character of the European nations would have been rapidly and deeply corrupted; for in all countries those men whose calling is to put their lives in jeopardy for the defence of the public weal enjoy high consideration, and are considered as the best arbitrators on points of honour and manly bearing. With the standard of morality established in the military profession, the general standard of morality must to a great extent sink or rise. It is, therefore, a fortunate circumstance, that during a long course of years, respect for the weak, and clemency towards the vanquished, have been considered as qualities not less essential to the accomplished soldier than personal courage. How long would this continue to be the case, if the slaying of prisoners were a part of the daily duty of the warrior? What man of kind and generous nature would, under such a system, willingly bear arms? Who, that was compelled to bear arms,

would long continue kind and generous? And is it not certain that, if barbarity towards the helpless became the characteristic of military men, the taint must rapidly spread to civil and to domestic life, and must show itself in all the dealings of the strong with the weak, of husbands with wives, of employers with workmen, of creditors with debtors?

But, thank God, Barère's decree was a mere dead letter. It was to be executed by men very different from those who, in the interior of France, were the instruments of the Committee of Public Safety, who prated at Jacobin Clubs, and ran to Fouquier Tinville with charges of incivism against women whom they could not seduce, and bankers from whom they could not extort money. The warriors who, under Hoche, had guarded the walls of Dunkirk, and who, under Kléber, had made good the defence of the wood of Monceaux, shrank with horror from an office more degrading than that of the hangman. "The Convention," said an officer to his men, "has sent orders that all the English prisoners shall be shot." "We will not shoot them," answered a stout-hearted sergeant. "Send them to the Convention. If the deputies take pleasure in killing a prisoner, they may kill him themselves, and eat him too, like savages as they are." This was the sentiment of the whole army. Bonaparte, who thoroughly understood war, who at Jaffa and elsewhere gave ample proof that he was not unwilling to strain the laws of war to their utmost rigour, and whose hatred of England amounted to a folly, always spoke of Barère's decree with loathing, and boasted that the army had refused to obey the Convention.

Such disobedience on the part of any other class of citizens would have been instantly punished by wholesale massacre; but the Committee of Public Safety was aware that the discipline which had tamed the unwarlike population of the

fields and cities might not answer in camps. To fling people by scores out of a boat, and, when they catch hold of it, to chop off their fingers with a hatchet, is undoubtedly a very agreeable pastime for a thorough-bred Jacobin, when the sufferers are, as at Nantes, old confessors, young girls, or women with child. But such sport might prove a little dangerous if tried upon grim ranks of grenadiers, marked with the scars of Hondschoote, and singed by the smoke of Fleurus.

Barère, however, found some consolation. If he could not succeed in murdering the English and the Hanoverians, he was amply indemnified by a new and vast slaughter of his own countrymen and countrywomen. If the defence which has been set up for the members of the Committee of Public Safety had been well founded, if it had been true that they governed with extreme severity only because the republic was in extreme peril, it is clear that the severity would have diminished as the peril diminished. But the fact is, that those cruelties for which the public danger is made a plea, became more and more enormous as the danger became less and less, and reached the full height when there was no longer any danger at all. In the autumn of 1793, there was undoubtedly reason to apprehend that France might be unable to maintain the struggle against the European coalition. The enemy was triumphant on the frontiers. More than half the departments disowned the authority of the Convention. But at that time eight or ten necks a-day were thought an ample allowance for the guillotine of the capital. In the summer of 1794, Bordeaux, Toulon, Caen, Lyons, Marseilles, had submitted to the ascendency of Paris. The French arms were victorious under the Pyrenees and on the Sambre. Brussels had fallen. Prussia had announced her intention of withdrawing from the contest. The Republic,

no longer content with defending her own independence, was beginning to meditate conquest beyond the Alps and the Rhine. She was now more formidable to her neighbours than ever Louis the Fourteenth had been. And now the Revolutionary Tribunal of Paris was not content with forty, fifty, sixty heads in a morning. It was just after a series of victories which destroyed the whole force of the single argument which has been urged in defence of the system of Terror, that the Committee of Public Safety resolved to infuse into that system an energy hitherto unknown. It was proposed to reconstruct the Revolutionary Tribunal, and to collect in the space of two pages the whole revolutionary jurisprudence. Lists of twelve judges and fifty jurors were made out from among the the fiercest Jacobins. The substantive law was simply this, that whatever the tribunal should think pernicious to the republic was a capital crime. The law of evidence was simply this, that whatever satisfied the jurors was sufficient proof. The law of procedure was of a piece with every thing else. There was to be an advocate against the prisoner, and no advocate for him. It was expressly declared that, if the jurors were in any manner convinced of the guilt of the prisoner, they might convict him without hearing a single witness. The only punishment which the court could inflict was death.

Robespierre proposed this decree. When he had read it, a murmur rose from the Convention. The fear which had long restrained the deputies from opposing the Committee was overcome by a stronger fear. Every man felt the knife at his throat. "The decree," said one, "is of grave importance. I move that it be printed, and that the debate be adjourned. If such a measure were adopted without time for consideration, I would blow my brains out at once." The motion for adjournment was seconded. Then Barère

sprang up. "It is impossible," he said, "that there can be any difference of opinion among us as to a law like this, a law so favourable in all respects to patriots; a law which insures the speedy punishment of conspirators. If there is to be an adjournment, I must insist that it shall not be for more than three days." The opposition was overawed; the decree was passed; and, during the six weeks which followed, the havoc was such as had never been known before.

And now the evil was beyond endurance. That timid majority which had for a time supported the Girondists, and which had, after their fall, contented itself with registering in silence the decrees of the Committee of Public Safety, at length drew courage from despair. Leaders of bold and firm character were not wanting, men such as Fouché and Tallien, who, having been long conspicuous among the chiefs of the Mountain, now found that their own lives, or lives still dearer to them than their own, were in extreme peril. Nor could it be longer kept secret that there was a schism in the despotic committee. On one side were Robespierre, St. Just, and Couthon; on the other, Collot and Billaud. Barère leaned towards these last, but only leaned towards them. As was ever his fashion when a great crisis was at hand, he fawned alternately on both parties, struck alternately at both, and held himself in readiness to chant the praises or to sign the death-warrant of either. In any event his Carmagnole was ready. The tree of liberty, the blood of traitors, the dagger of Brutus, the guineas of perfidious Albion, would do equally well for Billaud and for Robespierre.

The first attack which was made on Robespierre was indirect. An old woman named Catharine Théot, half maniac, half impostor, was protected by him, and exercised a strange

influence over his mind; for he was naturally prone to superstition, and, having abjured the faith in which he had been brought up, was looking about for something to believe. Barère drew up a report against Catharine, which contained many facetious conceits, and ended, as might be expected, with a motion for sending her and some other wretched creatures of both sexes to the Revolutionary Tribunal, or, in other words, to death. This report, however, he did not dare to read to the Convention himself. Another member, less timid, was induced to father the cruel buffoonery; and the real author enjoyed in security the dismay and vexation of Robespierre.

Barère now thought that he had done enough on one side, and that it was time to make his peace with the other. On the seventh of Thermidor, he pronounced in the Convention a panegyric on Robespierre. "That representative of the people," he said, "enjoys a reputation for patriotism, earned by five years of exertion, and by unalterable fidelity to the principles of independence and liberty." On the eighth of Thermidor, it became clear that a decisive struggle was at hand. Robespierre struck the first blow. He mounted the tribune, and uttered a long invective on his opponents. It was moved that his discourse should be printed; and Barère spoke for the printing. The sense of the Convention soon appeared to be the other way; and Barère apologised for his former speech, and implored his colleagues to abstain from disputes, which could be agreeable only to Pitt and York. On the next day, the ever-memorable ninth of Thermidor, came the real tug of war. Tallien, bravely taking his life in his hand, led the onset. Billaud followed: and then all that infinite hatred which had long been kept down by terror burst forth, and swept every barrier before it. When at length the voice of Robespierre, drowned by the president's bell, and by

shouts of "Down with the tyrant!" had died away in hoarse gasping, Barère arose. He began with timid and doubtful phrases, watched the effect of every word he uttered, and, when the feeling of the Assembly had been unequivocally manifested, declared against Robespierre. But it was not till the people out of doors, and especially the gunners of Paris, had espoused the cause of the Convention, that Barère felt quite at ease. Then he sprang to the tribune, poured forth a Carmagnole about Pisistratus and Catiline, and concluded by moving that the heads of Robespierre and Robespierre's accomplices should be cut off without a trial. The motion was carried. On the following morning the vanquished members of the Committee of Public Safety and their principal adherents suffered death. It was exactly one year since Barère had commenced his career of slaughter, by moving the proscription of his old allies the Girondists. We greatly doubt whether any human being has ever succeeded in packing more wickedness into the space of three hundred and sixty-five days.

The ninth of Thermidor is one of the great epochs in the history of Europe. It is true that the three members of the Committee of Public Safety who triumphed, were by no means better men than the three who fell. Indeed, we are inclined to think that of these six statesmen the least bad were Robespierre and Saint Just, whose cruelty was the effect of sincere fanaticism operating on narrow understandings and acrimonious tempers. The worst of the six was, beyond all doubt, Barère, who had no faith in any part of the system which he upheld by persecution; who, while he sent his fellow-creatures to death for being the third cousins of royalists, had not in the least made up his mind that a republic was better than a monarchy; who, while he slew his old friends for federalism, was himself far more a federalist than

any of them; who had become a murderer merely for his safety, and who continued to be a murderer merely for his pleasure.

The tendency of the vulgar is to embody every thing. Some individual is selected, and often selected very injudiciously, as the representative of every great movement of the public mind, of every great revolution in human affairs; and on this individual are concentrated all the love and all the hatred, all the admiration and all the contempt, which he ought rightfully to share with a whole party, a whole sect, a whole nation, a whole generation. Perhaps no human being has suffered so much from this propensity of the multitude as Robespierre. He is regarded not merely as what he was, an envious, malevolent zealot; but as the incarnation of Terror, as Jacobinism personified. The truth is, that it was not by him that the system of terror was carried to the last extreme. The most horrible days in the history of the revolutionary tribunal of Paris, were those which immediately preceded the ninth of Thermidor. Robespierre had then ceased to attend the meetings of the sovereign Committee; and the direction of affairs was really in the hands of Billaud, of Collot, and of Barère.

It had never occurred to those three tyrants, that in overthrowing Robespierre, they were overthrowing that system of Terror to which they were more attached than he had ever been. Their object was to go on slaying even more mercilessly than before. But they had misunderstood the nature of the great crisis which had at last arrived. The yoke of the Committee was broken for ever. The Convention had regained its liberty, had tried its strength, had vanquished and punished its enemies. A great reaction had commenced. Twenty-four hours after Robespierre had ceased to live, it was moved and carried, amidst loud bursts of applause, that

the sittings of the Revolutionary Tribunal should be suspended. Billaud was not at that moment present. He entered the hall soon after, learned with indignation what had passed, and moved that the vote should be rescinded. But loud cries of "No, no!" rose from those benches which had lately paid mute obedience to his commands. Barère came forward on the same day, and adjured the Convention not to relax the system of terror. "Beware, above all things," he cried, "of that fatal moderation which talks of peace and of clemency. Let aristocracy know, that here she will find only enemies sternly bent on vengeance, and judges who have no pity." But the day of the Carmagnoles was over; the restraint of fear had been relaxed; and the hatred with which the nation regarded the Jacobin dominion broke forth with ungovernable violence. Not more strongly did the tide of public opinion run against the old monarchy and aristocracy, at the time of the taking of the Bastile, than it now ran against the tyranny of the Mountain. From every dungeon the prisoners came forth, as they had gone in, by hundreds. The decree which forbade the soldiers of the republic to give quarter to the English, was repealed by an unanimous vote, amidst loud acclamations; nor, passed as it was, disobeyed as it was, and rescinded as it was, can it be with justice considered as a blemish on the fame of the French nation. The Jacobin Club was refractory. It was suppressed without resistance. The surviving Girondist deputies, who had concealed themselves from the vengeance of their enemies in caverns and garrets, were readmitted to their seats in the Convention. No day passed without some signal reparation of injustice; no street in Paris was without some trace of the recent change. In the theatre, the bust of Marat was pulled down from its pedestal and broken in pieces, amidst the applause of the audience. His carcass was ejected from the

Pantheon. The celebrated picture of his death, which had hung in the hall of the Convention, was removed. The savage inscriptions with which the walls of the city had been covered disappeared; and in place of death and terror, humanity, the watchword of the new rulers, was every where to be seen. In the mean time, the gay spirit of France, recently subdued by oppression, and now elated by the joy of a great deliverance, wantoned in a thousand forms. Art, taste, luxury, revived. Female beauty regained its empire — an empire strengthened by the remembrance of all the tender and all the sublime virtues which women, delicately bred and reputed frivolous, had displayed during the evil days. Refined manners, chivalrous sentiments, followed in the train of love. The dawn of the Arctic summer day after the Arctic winter night, the great unsealing of the waters, the awakening of animal and vegetable life, the sudden softening of the air, the sudden blooming of the flowers, the sudden bursting of whole forests into verdure, is but a feeble type of that happiest and most genial of revolutions, the revolution of the ninth of Thermidor.

But, in the midst of the revival of all kind and generous sentiments, there was one portion of the community against which mercy itself seemed to cry out for vengeance. The chiefs of the late government and their tools were now never named but as the men of blood, the drinkers of blood, the cannibals. In some parts of France, where the creatures of the Mountain had acted with peculiar barbarity, the populace took the law into its own hands, and meted out justice to the Jacobin measure; but at Paris the punishments were inflicted with order and decency; and were few when compared with the number, and lenient when compared with the enormity, of the crimes. Soon after the ninth of Thermidor, two of the vilest of mankind, Fouquier Tinville, whom Barère had

placed at the Revolutionary Tribunal, and Lebon, whom Barère had defended in the Convention, were placed under arrest. A third miscreant soon shared their fate, Carrier, the tyrant of Nantes. The trials of these men brought to light horrors surpassing any thing that Suetonius and Lampridius have related of the worst Cæsars. But it was impossible to punish subordinate agents who, bad as they were, had only acted in accordance with the spirit of the government which they served, and, at the same time, to grant impunity to the heads of the wicked administration. A cry was raised, both within and without the Convention, for justice on Collot, Billaud, and Barère.

Collot and Billaud, with all their vices, appear to have been men of resolute natures. They made no submission; but opposed to the hatred of mankind, at first a fierce resistance, and afterwards a dogged and sullen endurance. Barère, on the other hand, as soon as he began to understand the real nature of the revolution of Thermidor, attempted to abandon the Mountain, and to obtain admission among his old friends of the moderate party. He declared every where that he had never been in favour of severe measures; that he had always condemned and lamented the manner in which the Brissotin deputies had been treated. He now preached mercy from that tribune from which he had recently preached extermination. "The time," he said, "has come at which our clemency may be indulged without danger. We may now safely consider temporary imprisonment as an adequate punishment for political misdemeanours." It was only a fortnight since, from the same place, he had declaimed against the moderation which dared even to talk of clemency; it was only a fortnight since he had ceased to send men and women to the guillotine of Paris, at the rate of three hundred a-week. He now wished to make his peace with the moderate

party at the expense of the Terrorists, as he had, a year before, made his peace with the Terrorists at the expense of the moderate party. But he was disappointed. He had left himself no retreat. His face, his voice, his rants, his jokes, had become hateful to the Convention. When he spoke he was interrupted by murmurs. Bitter reflections were daily cast on his cowardice and perfidy. On one occasion Carnot rose to give an account of a victory, and so far forgot the gravity of his character, as to indulge in the sort of oratory which Barère had affected on similar occasions. He was interrupted by cries of "No more Carmagnoles!" "No more of Barère's puns!"

At length, five months after the revolution of Thermidor, the Convention resolved that a committee of twenty-one members should be appointed to examine into the conduct of Billaud, Collot, and Barère. In some weeks the report was made. From that report we learn that a paper had been discovered, signed by Barère, and containing a proposition for adding the last improvement to the system of terror. France was to be divided into circuits; itinerant revolutionary tribunals, composed of trusty Jacobins, were to move from department to department; and the guillotine was to travel in their train.

Barère, in his defence, insisted that no speech or motion which he had made in the Convention could, without a violation of the freedom of debate, be treated as a crime. He was asked how he could resort to such a mode of defence, after putting to death so many deputies on account of opinions expressed in the Convention. He had nothing to say, but that it was much to be regretted that the sound principle had ever been violated.

He arrogated to himself a large share of the merit of the revolution of Thermidor. The men who had risked their

lives to effect that revolution, and who knew that, if they had failed, Barère would, in all probability, have moved the decree for beheading them without a trial, and have drawn up a proclamation announcing their guilt and their punishment to all France, were by no means disposed to acquiesce in his claims. He was reminded that, only forty-eight hours before the decisive conflict, he had, in the tribune, been profuse of adulation to Robespierre. His answer to this reproach is worthy of himself. "It was necessary," he said, "to dissemble. It was necessary to flatter Robespierre's vanity, and, by panegyric, to impel him to the attack. This was the motive which induced me to load him with those praises of which you complain. Who ever blamed Brutus for dissembling with Tarquin?"

The accused triumvirs had only one chance of escaping punishment. There was severe distress at that moment among the working people of the capital. This distress the Jacobins attributed to the reaction of Thermidor, to the lenity with which the aristocrats were now treated, and to the measures which had been adopted against the chiefs of the late administration. Nothing is too absurd to be believed by a populace which has not breakfasted, and which does not know how it is to dine. The rabble of the Faubourg St. Antoine rose, menaced the deputies, and demanded with loud cries the liberation of the persecuted patriots. But the Convention was no longer such as it had been, when similar means were employed too successfully against the Girondists. Its spirit was roused. Its strength had been proved. Military means were at its command. The tumult was suppressed, and it was decreed that same evening that Collot, Billaud, and Barère should instantly be removed to a distant place of confinement.

The next day the order of the Convention was executed. The account which Barère has given of his journey is the most interesting and the most trustworthy part of these Memoirs. There is no witness so infamous that a court of justice will not take his word against himself; and even Barère may be believed when he tells us how much he was hated and despised.

The carriage in which he was to travel passed, surrounded by armed men, along the street of St. Honoré. A crowd soon gathered round it, and increased every moment. On the long flight of steps before the church of St. Roch stood rows of eager spectators. It was with difficulty that the coach could make its way through those who hung upon it, hooting, cursing, and striving to burst the doors. Barère thought his life in danger, and was conducted at his own request to a public office, where he hoped that he might find shelter till the crowd should disperse. In the mean time, another discussion on his fate took place in the Convention. It was proposed to deal with him as he had dealt with better men, to put him out of the pale of the law, and to deliver him at once without any trial to the headsman. But the humanity which, since the ninth of Thermidor, had generally directed the public counsels, restrained the deputies from taking this course.

It was now night; and the streets gradually became quiet. The clock struck twelve; and Barère, under a strong guard, again set forth on his journey. He was conducted over the river to the place where the Orleans road branches off from the southern boulevard. Two travelling carriages stood there. In one of them was Billaud, attended by two officers; in the other, two more officers were waiting to receive Barère. Collot was already on the road.

At Orleans, a city which had suffered cruelly from the Jacobin tyranny, the three deputies were surrounded by a mob bent on tearing them to pieces. All the national guards of the neighbourhood were assembled; and this force was not greater than the emergency required; for the multitude pursued the carriages far on the road to Blois.

At Amboise the prisoners learned that Tours was ready to receive them. The stately bridge was occupied by a throng of people, who swore that the men under whose rule the Loire had been choked with corpses, should have full personal experience of the nature of a *noyade*. In consequence of this news, the officers who had charge of the criminals made such arrangements that the carriages reached Tours at two in the morning, and drove straight to the post-house. Fresh horses were instantly ordered, and the travellers started again at full gallop. They had in truth not a moment to lose; for the alarm had been given; lights were seen in motion; and the yells of a great multitude, disappointed of its revenge, mingled with the sound of the departing wheels.

At Poitiers there was another narrow escape. As the prisoners quitted the post-house, they saw the whole population pouring in fury down the steep declivity on which the city is built. They passed near Niort, but could not venture to enter it. The inhabitants came forth with threatening aspect, and vehemently cried to the postilions to stop; but the postilions urged the horses to full speed, and soon left the town behind. Through such dangers the men of blood were brought in safety to Rochelle.

Oléron was the place of their destination, a dreary island beaten by the raging waves of the Bay of Biscay. The prisoners were confined in the castle; each had a single chamber, at the door of which a guard was placed; and each was

allowed the ration of a single soldier. They were not allowed to communicate either with the garrison or with the population of the island; and soon after their arrival they were denied the indulgence of walking on the ramparts. The only place where they were suffered to take exercise was the esplanade where the troops were drilled.

They had not been long in this situation when news came that the Jacobins of Paris had made a last attempt to regain ascendency in the state, that the hall of the Convention had been forced by a furious crowd, that one of the deputies had been murdered and his head fixed on a pike, that the life of the President had been for a time in imminent danger, and that some members of the legislature had not been ashamed to join the rioters. But troops had arrived in time to prevent a massacre. The insurgents had been put to flight; the inhabitants of the disaffected quarters of the capital had been disarmed; the guilty deputies had suffered the just punishment of their treason; and the power of the Mountain was broken for ever. These events strengthened the aversion with which the system of Terror and the authors of that system were regarded. One member of the Convention had moved, that the three prisoners of Oléron should be put to death; another, that they should be brought back to Paris, and tried by a council of war. These propositions were rejected. But something was conceded to the party which called for severity. A vessel which had been fitted out with great expedition at Rochefort touched at Oléron, and it was announced to Collot and Billaud that they must instantly go on board. They were forthwith conveyed to Guiana, where Collot soon drank himself to death with brandy. Billaud lived many years, shunning his fellow-creatures and shunned by them; and diverted his lonely hours by teaching parrots to talk. Why a distinction was made between Barère and his

companions in guilt, neither he nor any other writer, as far as we know, has explained. It does not appear that the distinction was meant to be at all in his favour; for orders soon arrived from Paris, that he should be brought to trial for his crimes before the criminal court of the department of the Upper Charente. He was accordingly brought back to the continent, and confined during some months at Saintes, in an old convent which had lately been turned into a jail.

While he lingered here, the reaction which had followed the great crisis of Thermidor met with a temporary check. The friends of the house of Bourbon, presuming on the indulgence with which they had been treated after the fall of Robespierre, not only ventured to avow their opinions with little disguise, but at length took arms against the Convention, and were not put down till much blood had been shed in the streets of Paris. The vigilance of the public authorities was therefore now directed chiefly against the Royalists, and the rigour with which the Jacobins had lately been treated was somewhat relaxed. The Convention, indeed, again resolved that Barère should be sent to Guiana. But this decree was not carried into effect. The prisoner, probably with the connivance of some powerful persons, made his escape from Saintes and fled to Bordeaux, where he remained in concealment during some years. There seems to have been a kind of understanding between him and the government, that, as long as he hid himself, he should not be found, but that, if he obtruded himself on the public eye, he must take the consequences of his rashness.

While the constitution of 1795, with its Executive Directory, its Council of Elders, and its Council of Five Hundred, was in operation, he continued to live under the ban of the law. It was in vain that he solicited, even at moments when the politics of the Mountain seemed to be again in the

ascendant, a remission of the sentence pronounced by the Convention. Even his fellow-regicides, even the authors of the slaughters of Vendémiaire and of the arrests of Fructidor, were ashamed of him.

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For these reasons the First Consul was disposed to employ Barère as a writer and as a spy. But Barère — was it possible that he would submit to such a degradation? Bad as he was, he had played a great part. He had belonged to that class of criminals who fill the world with the renown of their crimes; he had been one of a cabinet which had ruled France with absolute power, and made war on all Europe with signal success. Nay, he had been, though not the most powerful, yet, with the single exception of Robespierre, the most conspicuous member of that cabinet. His name had been a household word at Moscow and at Philadelphia, at Edinburgh and at Cadiz. The blood of the Queen of France, the blood of the greatest orators and philosophers of France, was on his hands. He had spoken; and it had been decreed, that the plough should pass over the great city of Lyons. He

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> "Virtue, I grant you, is an empty boast;
> But shall the dignity of vice be lost?"

So sang Pope; and so felt Barère. When it was proposed to him to publish a Journal in defence of the Consular government, rage and shame inspired him for the first and last time with something like courage. He had filled as large a space in the eyes of mankind as Mr. Pitt or General Washington; and he was coolly invited to descend at once to the level of Mr. Lewis Goldsmith. He saw, too, with agonies of envy, that a wide distinction was made between himself and the other statesmen of the Revolution who were summoned to the aid of the government. Those statesmen were required, indeed, to make large sacrifices of principle; but they were not called on to sacrifice what, in the opinion of the vulgar, constitutes personal dignity. They were made tribunes and legislators, ambassadors and counsellors of state, ministers, senators, and consuls. They might reasonably expect to rise with the rising fortunes of their master; and, in truth, many of them were destined to wear the badge of his Legion of Honour and of his order of the Iron Crown; to be arch-chancellors and arch-treasurers, counts, dukes, and princes. Barère, only six years before, had been far more powerful, far more widely renowned, than any of them; and now, while they were thought worthy to represent the majesty of France at foreign courts, while they received crowds of suitors in gilded antechambers, he was to pass his life in

measuring paragraphs, and scolding correctors of the press. It was too much. Those lips which had never before been able to fashion themselves to a No, now murmured expostulation and refusal. "I could not" — these are his own words — "abase myself to such a point as to serve the First Consul merely in the capacity of a journalist, while so many insignificant, low, and servile people, such as the Treilhards, the Rœderers, the Lebruns, the Marets, and others whom it is superfluous to name, held the first place in this government of upstarts."

This outbreak of spirit was of short duration. Napoleon was inexorable. It is said indeed that he was, for a moment, half inclined to admit Barère into the Council of State; but the members of that body remonstrated in the strongest terms, and declared that such a nomination would be a disgrace to them all. This plan was therefore relinquished. Thenceforth Barère's only chance of obtaining the patronage of the government was to subdue his pride, to forget that there had been a time when, with three words, he might have had the heads of the three Consuls, and to betake himself, humbly and industriously, to the task of composing lampoons on England and panegyrics on Bonaparte.

It has been often asserted, we know not on what grounds, that Barère was employed by the government, not only as a writer, but as a censor of the writings of other men. This imputation he vehemently denies in his Memoirs; but our readers will probably agree with us in thinking, that his denial leaves the question exactly where it was.

Thus much is certain, that he was not restrained from exercising the office of censor by any scruple of conscience or honour; for he did accept an office, compared with which that of censor, odious as it is, may be called an august and beneficent magistracy. He began to have what are delicately

called relations with the police. We are not sure that we have formed, or that we can convey, an exact notion of the nature of Barère's new calling. It is a calling unknown in our country. It has indeed often happened in England, that a plot has been revealed to the government by one of the conspirators. The informer has sometimes been directed to carry it fair towards his accomplices, and to let the evil design come to full maturity. As soon as his work is done, he is generally snatched from the public gaze, and sent to some obscure village, or to some remote colony. The use of spies, even to this extent, is in the highest degree unpopular in England; but a political spy by profession, is a creature from which our island is as free as it is from wolves. In France the race is well known, and was never more numerous, more greedy, more cunning, or more savage, than under the government of Bonaparte.

Our idea of a gentleman in relations with the Consular and Imperial police may perhaps be incorrect. Such as it is, we will try to convey it to our readers. We image to ourselves a welldressed person, with a soft voice and affable manners. His opinions are those of the society in which he finds himself, but a little stronger. He often complains, in the language of honest indignation, that what passes in private conversation finds its way strangely to the government, and cautions his associates to take care what they say when they are not sure of their company. As for himself, he owns that he is indiscreet. He can never refrain from speaking his mind; and that is the reason that he is not prefect of a department.

In a gallery of the Palais Royal he overhears two friends talking earnestly about the King and the Count of Artois. He follows them into a coffeehouse, sits at the table next to them, calls for his half-dish and his small glass of cognac, takes up a Journal, and seems occupied with the news. His neighbours

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So sang Pope; and so felt Barère. When it was proposed to him to publish a Journal in defence of the Consular government, rage and shame inspired him for the first and last time with something like courage. He had filled as large a space in the eyes of mankind as Mr. Pitt or General Washington; and he was coolly invited to descend at once to the level of Mr. Lewis Goldsmith. He saw, too, with agonies of envy, that a wide distinction was made between himself and the other statesmen of the Revolution who were summoned to the aid of the government. Those statesmen were required, indeed, to make large sacrifices of principle; but they were not called on to sacrifice what, in the opinion of the vulgar, constitutes personal dignity. They were made tribunes and legislators, ambassadors and counsellors of state, ministers, senators, and consuls. They might reasonably expect to rise with the rising fortunes of their master; and, in truth, many of them were destined to wear the badge of his Legion of Honour and of his order of the Iron Crown; to be arch-chancellors and arch-treasurers, counts, dukes, and princes. Barère, only six years before, had been far more powerful, far more widely renowned, than any of them; and now, while they were thought worthy to represent the majesty of France at foreign courts, while they received crowds of suitors in gilded antechambers, he was to pass his life in

owns that with that envoy he had relations which he took the greatest pains to conceal from his own government; that they met twice a-day, and that their conversation chiefly turned on the vices of Napoleon, on his designs against Spain, and on the best mode of rendering those designs abortive. In truth, Barère's baseness was unfathomable. In the lowest deeps of shame he found out lower deeps. It is bad to be a sycophant; it is bad to be a spy. But even among sycophants and spies there are degrees of meanness. The vilest sycophant is he who privily slanders the master on whom he fawns; the vilest spy is he who serves foreigners against the government of his native land.

From 1807 to 1814 Barère lived in obscurity, railing as bitterly as his craven cowardice would permit against the Imperial administration, and coming sometimes unpleasantly across the police. When the Bourbons returned, he, as might have been expected, became a royalist, and wrote a pamphlet setting forth the horrors of the system from which the Restoration had delivered France, and magnifying the wisdom and goodness which had dictated the charter. He who had voted for the death of Louis, he who had moved the decree for the trial of Marie Antoinette, he whose hatred of monarchy had led him to make war even upon the sepulchres of ancient monarchs, assures us with great complacency, that "in this work monarchical principles and attachment to the House of Bourbon are nobly expressed." By this apostasy he got nothing, not even any additional infamy; for his character was already too black to be blackened.

During the hundred days he again emerged for a very short time into public life; he was chosen by his native district a member of the Chamber of Representatives. But though that assembly was composed in a great measure of men who

regarded the excesses of the Jacobins with indulgence, he found himself an object of general aversion. When the President first informed the Chamber that M. Barère requested a hearing, a deep and indignant murmur ran round the benches. After the battle of Waterloo, Barère proposed that the Chamber should save France from the victorious enemy, by putting forth a proclamation about the pass of Thermopylæ, and the Lacedæmonian custom of wearing flowers in times of extreme danger. Whether this composition, if it had then appeared, would have stopped the English and Prussian armies, is a question respecting which we are left to conjecture. The Chamber refused to adopt this last of the Carmagnoles.

The Emperor had abdicated. The Bourbons returned. The Chamber of Representatives, after burlesquing during a few weeks the proceedings of the National Convention, retired with the well-earned character of having been the silliest political assembly that had met in France. Those dreaming pedants and praters never for a moment comprehended their position. They could never understand that Europe must be either conciliated or vanquished; that Europe could be conciliated only by the restoration of Louis, and vanquished only by means of a dictatorial power entrusted to Napoleon. They would not hear of Louis; yet they would not hear of the only measures which could keep him out. They incurred the enmity of all foreign powers by putting Napoleon at their head; yet they shackled him, thwarted him, quarreled with him about every trifle, abandoned him on the first reverse. They then opposed declamations and disquisitions to eight hundred thousand bayonets; played at making a constitution for their country, when it depended on the indulgence of the victor whether they should have a country; and were at last interrupted in the midst of their babble about the rights of

man and the sovereignty of the people, by the soldiers of Wellington and Blucher.

A new Chamber of Deputies was elected, so bitterly hostile to the Revolution, that there was no small risk of a new Reign of Terror. It is just, however, to say that the King, his ministers, and his allies, exerted themselves to restrain the violence of the fanatical royalists, and that the punishments inflicted, though in our opinion unjustifiable, were few and lenient when compared with those which were demanded by M. de Labourdonnaye and M. Hyde de Neuville. We have always heard, and are inclined to believe, that the government was not disposed to treat even the regicides with severity. But on this point the feeling of the Chamber of Deputies was so strong, that it was thought necessary to make some concession. It was enacted, therefore, that whoever, having voted in January 1793 for the death of Louis the Sixteenth, had in any manner given in an adhesion to the government of Bonaparte during the hundred days, should be banished for life from France. Barère fell within this description. He had voted for the death of Louis; and he had sat in the Chamber of Representatives during the hundred days.

He accordingly retired to Belgium, and resided there, forgotten by all mankind, till the year 1830. After the revolution of July he was at liberty to return to France, and he fixed his residence in his native province. But he was soon involved in a succession of lawsuits with his nearest relations — "three fatal sisters and an ungrateful brother," to use his own words. Who was in the right is a question about which we have no means of judging, and certainly shall not take Barère's word. The Courts appear to have decided some points in his favour and some against him. The natural inference is, that there were faults on all sides. The result of this litigation was, that

the old man was reduced to extreme poverty, and was forced to sell his paternal house.

As far as we can judge from the few facts which remain to be mentioned, Barère continued Barère to the last. After his exile he turned Jacobin again, and, when he came back to France, joined the party of the extreme left in railing at Louis Philippe, and at all Louis Philippe's ministers. M. Casimir Périer, M. De Broglie, M. Guizot, and M. Thiers, in particular, are honoured with his abuse; and the King himself is held up to execration as a hypocritical tyrant. Nevertheless, Barère had no scruple about accepting a charitable donation of a thousand francs a-year from the privy purse of the sovereign whom he hated and reviled. This pension, together with some small sums occasionally doled out to him by the department of the Interior, on the ground that he was a distressed man of letters, and by the department of Justice, on the ground that he had formerly held a high judicial office, saved him from the necessity of begging his bread. Having survived all his colleagues of the renowned Committee of Public Safety, and almost all his colleagues of the Convention, he died in January 1841. He had attained his eighty-sixth year.

We have now laid before our readers what we believe to be a just account of this man's life. Can it be necessary for us to add any thing for the purpose of assisting their judgment of his character? If we were writing about any of his colleagues in the Committee of Public Safety, about Carnot, about Robespierre, or St. Just, nay, even about Couthon, Collot, or Billaud, we might feel it necessary to go into a full examination of the arguments which have been employed to vindicate or to excuse the system of Terror. We could, we think, show that France was saved from her foreign enemies, not by the system of Terror, but in spite of it; and that the perils which

were made the plea for the violent policy of the Mountain, were to a great extent created by that very policy. We could, we think, also show that the evils produced by the Jacobin administration did not terminate when it fell; that it bequeathed a long series of calamities to France and to Europe; that public opinion, which had during two generations been constantly becoming more and more favourable to civil and religious freedom, underwent, during the days of Terror, a change of which the traces are still to be distinctly perceived. It was natural that there should be such a change, when men saw that those who called themselves the champions of popular rights had compressed into the space of twelve months more crimes than the Kings of France, Merovingian, Carlovingian, and Capetian, had perpetrated in twelve centuries. Freedom was regarded as a great delusion. Men were willing to submit to the government of hereditary princes, of fortunate soldiers, of nobles, of priests; to any government but that of philosophers and philanthropists. Hence the imperial despotism, with its enslaved press and its silent tribune, its dungeons stronger than the old Bastile, and its tribunals more obsequious than the old parliaments. Hence the restoration of the Bourbons and of the Jesuits, the Chamber of 1815 with its categories of proscription, the revival of the feudal spirit, the encroachments of the clergy, the persecution of the Protestants, the appearance of a new breed of De Montforts and Dominics in the full light of the nineteenth century. Hence the admission of France into the Holy Alliance, and the war waged by the old soldiers of the tricolor against the liberties of Spain. Hence, too, the apprehensions with which, even at the present day, the most temperate plans for widening the narrow basis of the French representation are regarded by those who are especially interested in the security of property and the maintenance of order. Half a

century has not sufficed to obliterate the stain which one year of depravity and madness has left on the noblest of causes.

Nothing is more ridiculous than the manner in which writers like M. Hippolyte Carnot defend or excuse the Jacobin administration, while they declaim against the reaction which followed. That the reaction has produced and is still producing much evil, is perfectly true. But what produced the reaction? The spring flies up with a force proportioned to that with which it has been pressed down. The pendulum which is drawn far in one direction swings as far in the other. The joyous madness of intoxication in the evening is followed by languor and nausea on the morrow. And so, in politics, it is the sure law that every excess shall generate its opposite; nor does he deserve the name of a statesman who strikes a great blow without fully calculating the effect of the rebound. But such calculation was infinitely beyond the reach of the authors of the Reign of Terror. Violence, and more violence, blood, and more blood, made up their whole policy. In a few months these poor creatures succeeded in bringing about a reaction, of which none of them saw, and of which none of us may see, the close; and, having brought it about, they marvelled at it; they bewailed it; they execrated it; they ascribed it to every thing but the real cause—their own immorality and their own profound incapacity for the conduct of great affairs.

These, however, are considerations to which, on the present occasion, it is hardly necessary for us to advert; for, be the defence which has been set up for the Jacobin policy good or bad, it is a defence which cannot avail Barère. From his own life, from his own pen, from his own mouth, we can prove that the part which he took in the work of blood is to be attributed, not even to sincere fanaticism, not even to mis-

directed and ill-regulated patriotism, but either to cowardice, or to delight in human misery. Will it be pretended that it was from public spirit that he murdered the Girondists? In these very Memoirs he tells us that he always regarded their death as the greatest calamity that could befall France. Will it be pretended that it was from public spirit that he raved for the head of the Austrian woman? In these very Memoirs he tells us that the time spent in attacking her was ill spent, and ought to have been employed in concerting measures of national defence. Will it be pretended that he was induced by sincere and earnest abhorrence of kingly government to butcher the living and to outrage the dead; he who invited Napoleon to take the title of King of Kings, he who assures us, that after the Restoration he expressed in noble language his attachment to monarchy, and to the house of Bourbon? Had he been less mean, something might have been said in extenuation of his cruelty. Had he been less cruel, something might have been said in extenuation of his meanness. But for him, regicide and court-spy, for him who patronised Lebon and betrayed Demerville, for him who wantoned alternately in gasconades of Jacobinism, and gasconades of servility, what excuse has the largest charity to offer?

We cannot conclude, without saying something about two parts of his character, which his biographer appears to consider as deserving of high admiration. Barère, it is admitted, was somewhat fickle; but in two things he was consistent, in his love of Christianity, and in his hatred to England. If this were so, we must say that England is much more beholden to him than Christianity.

It is possible that our inclinations may bias our judgment; but we think that we do not flatter ourselves when we say, that Barère's aversion to our country was a sentiment as deep and constant as his mind was capable of entertaining. The

value of this compliment is indeed somewhat diminished by the circumstance, that he knew very little about us. His ignorance of our institutions, manners and history, is the less excusable, because, according to his own account, he consorted much, during the peace of Amiens, with Englishmen of note, such as that eminent nobleman Lord Greaten, and that not less eminent philosopher Mr. Mackensie Cœfhis. In spite, however, of his connexion with these well-known ornaments of our country, he was so ill informed about us as to fancy that our government was always laying plans to torment him. If he was hooted at Saintes, probably by people whose relations he had murdered, it was because the cabinet of St. James's had hired the mob. If nobody would read his bad books, it was because the cabinet of St. James's had secured the Reviewers. His accounts of Mr. Fox, of Mr. Pitt, of the Duke of Wellington, of Mr. Canning, swarm with blunders, surpassing even the ordinary blunders committed by Frenchmen who write about England. Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt, he tells us, were ministers in two different reigns. Mr. Pitt's sinking fund was instituted in order to enable England to pay subsidies to the powers allied against the French republic. The Duke of Wellington's house in Hyde Park was built by the nation, which twice voted the sum of L. 200,000 for the purpose. This, however, is exclusive of the cost of the frescoes, which were also paid for out of the public purse. Mr. Canning was the first Englishman whose death Europe had reason to lament; for the death of Lord Ward, a relation, we presume, of Lord Greaten and Mr. Cœfhis, had been an immense benefit to mankind.

Ignorant, however, as Barère was, he knew enough of us to hate us; and we persuade ourselves that, had he known us better, he would have hated us more. The nation which has combined, beyond all example and all hope, the blessings

of liberty with those of order, might well be an object of aversion to one who had been false alike to the cause of order and to the cause of liberty. We have had amongst us intemperate zeal for popular rights; we have had amongst us also the intemperance of loyalty. But we have never been shocked by such a spectacle as the Barère of 1794, or as the Barère of 1804. Compared with him, our fiercest demagogues have been gentle; compared with him, our meanest courtiers have been manly. Mix together Thistlewood and Bubb Dodington, and you are still far from having Barère. The antipathy between him and us is such, that neither for the crimes of his earlier, nor for those of his later life, does our language, rich as it is, furnish us with adequate names. We have found it difficult to relate his history without having perpetual recourse to the French vocabulary of horror, and to the French vocabulary of baseness. It is not easy to give a notion of his conduct in the Convention, without using those emphatic terms, *guillotinade*, *noyade*, *fusillade*, *mitraillade*. It is not easy to give a notion of his conduct under the Consulate and the Empire, without borrowing such words as *mouchard* and *mouton*.

We therefore like his invectives against us much better than any thing else that he has written; and dwell on them, not merely with complacency, but with a feeling akin to gratitude. It was but little that he could do to promote the honour of our country; but that little he did strenuously and constantly. Renegade, traitor, slave, coward, liar, slanderer, murderer, hack writer, police-spy — the one small service which he could render to England, was to hate her: and such as he was may all who hate her be!

We cannot say that we contemplate with equal satisfaction that fervent and constant zeal for religion, which,

according to M. Hippolyte Carnot, distinguished Barère; for, as we think that whatever brings dishonour on religion is a serious evil, we had, we own, indulged a hope that Barère was an atheist. We now learn, however, that he was at no time even a sceptic, that he adhered to his faith through the whole Revolution, and that he has left several manuscript works on divinity. One of these is a pious treatise, entitled, "Of Christianity and of its Influence." Another consists of meditations on the Psalms, which will doubtless greatly console and edify the Church.

This makes the character complete. Whatsoever things are false, whatsoever things are dishonest, whatsoever things are unjust, whatsoever things are impure, whatsoever things are hateful, whatsoever things are of evil report, if there be any vice, and if there be any infamy, all these things, we knew, were blended in Barère. But one thing was still wanting, and that M. Hippolyte Carnot has supplied. When to such an assemblage of qualities a high profession of piety is added, the effect becomes overpowering. We sink under the contemplation of such exquisite and manifold perfection; and feel, with deep humility, how presumptuous it was in us to think of composing the legend of this beatified athlete of the faith, Saint Bertrand of the Carmagnoles.

Something more we had to say about him. But let him go. We did not seek him out, and will not keep him longer. If those who call themselves his friends had not forced him on our notice, we should never have vouchsafed to him more than a passing word of scorn and abhorrence, such as we might fling at his brethren, Hébert and Fouquier Tinville, and Carrier and Lebon. We have no pleasure in seeing human nature thus degraded. We turn with disgust from the filthy and spiteful Yahoos of the fiction; and the filthiest

and most spiteful Yahoo of the fiction was a noble creature when compared with the Barère of history. But what is no pleasure, M. Hippolyte Carnot has made a duty. It is no light thing, that a man in high and honourable public trust, a man who, from his connexions and position, may not unnaturally be supposed to speak the sentiments of a large class of his countrymen, should come forward to demand approbation for a life, black with every sort of wickedness, and unredeemed by a single virtue. This M. Hippolyte Carnot has done. By attempting to enshrine this Jacobin carrion, he has forced us to gibbet it; and we venture to say that, from the eminence of infamy on which we have placed it, he will not easily take it down.

THE END.

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